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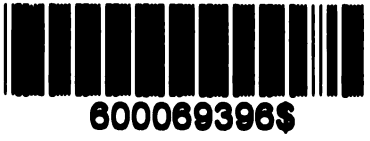
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MATRIMONIAL SHIPWRECKS;

OR,

MERE HUMAN NATURE.

"Être unis d'habitation, et non de cœur, c'est un tourment—Être unis de cœur et non d'habitation, c'est un bonheur—Mais être unis d'habitation et de cœur, c'est un Paradis."—*Hughes de St. Victor.*

BY ANNETTE MARIE MAILLARD,

AUTHORESS OF "ZINGRA," "THE COMPULSORY MARRIAGE," "MILES TREMENHERE," ETC., ETC.

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MATRIMONIAL SHIPWRECKS.

CHAPTER I.

KATE is on Adair's arm, sauntering through the rooms, awaiting the next dance, whatever fate and the fiddlers may decide it to be; she has accepted him as her partner, much to Sir Philip's relief, who is off in search of Mariam. Kate has resolved—her first emotion over, which it had been impossible to suppress—to be dignified in her freedom, not cold; that would shew too much feeling, but friendly, kindly, all a mere sister should be; what her heart felt, only she herself could know.

Whilst they were in the crowd, only a few commonplace observations passed between them; but crowds thin, and there is no place snugger or safer for quiet conversation than a ball-room, when people well know where to find the corners dedicated to mystery. One of these, Adair led Kate into, not from the slightest intention of uttering one word which Lady Montgomery ought not to listen to; whatever impulse or great

temptation might lead him to commit, decidedly premeditation would have no hand in it.

Arrived in their corner, he looked around, none were within hearing.

"Katty, darling," he began, "let me, now that we are alone—for alone we seem here—from my soul wish you joy in your marriage with Sir Philip. You are a lucky girl after all; for he is a nice fellow, and it will not be his fault, I am sure, if you are unhappy."

"I think you are right in your opinion of him, and those who judge dispassionately judge best."

There was a shade of sarcasm in her tone—however, he did not notice it.

"I take credit to myself," he continued gaily, "for not envying him; but, as it would be very wrong to do so, I check the inclination. Moreover, there is no use expending sentiments which would only be cast to the winds; for you have not treated me quite kindly in the affair, and I ought to bear it in mind against you."

"As how, pray?" and her lip curled in scorn. She thought, even with her little experience of the world, that it was the hackneyed phraseology of the world of gallantry, which she had the good taste to detest.

"Why, Katty, after knowing one another so well and long, I think you might have told me yourself, and not have allowed me to listen with the crowd, to the tinkling of the wedding bells proclaiming the event."

"If you will tell me why I should imagine it could interest one so much, who knew my address weeks and

weeks, without condescending to call, I will then find a fitting reply."

"Kate," his voice sank to a whisper, as he glanced round, "there are persons we avoid from dislike; others from too much liking. I leave you to choose the category in which I am to be placed."

"You insinuate the latter; I choose the former, as truthful," she bluntly replied.

"You are wrong, and you know it; but I suppose you were so much occupied with Sir Philip, that an old friend's anxiety about you reckoned no moment in your day's tax of duties to be fulfilled."

"You really pain me, Richard," she cried, impatiently shrugging her shoulders, and moving a step forward; "all this double-dealing insinuation is unworthy of your *once* candid nature, and of my ear as a wife!"

"As you will, Kate," he replied; "but there was a time you thought more highly of me, than to suppose I could be base enough to endanger the happiness I rejoice in seeing you possessed of, by insinuation or word of mine; if I transgressed once, in weakness, I have grown strong since in my good resolutions, and if you *really* knew me, you would appreciate my self-denial in not seeking you at Brixton. I have more than once ridden within view of the little cottage, and envied those who *dared* visit you; I durst not for many reasons, and none offensive to you, quite the contrary. Come let us join the dancers; I am *en train*," and with a forced smile he drew her arm under his own, and led her away. She would have given much to take his hand

in peace and renewed affection; but woman's strong unbending pride restrained her; she felt so deeply wounded by his silence as well as absence. Adair on his part said to himself, in bitterness, "All women are deceitful, all the world selfish. Well, so will I become, and thus compete with, and not be beaten. Lady Montgomery has effaced my little Kate."

And, with these errors to awake from, they moved listlessly and only in cold monosyllabic conversation through the dance, a prosaic quadrille. Meanwhile, Sir Philip rambled about until he could meet some one whose presence might herald news of Mariam. Who should this destined one be but Mrs. Bruce, and, tapping his arm as he was passing without noticing her, she motioned to a place beside herself, and commenced loudly congratulating him on his sweet wife, and, through him, the sweet wife on her good fortune in gaining the affections of one so charming as himself.

"Such an union must be happy," she whispered; "but be chary of your joy and felicity—too many envy it."

"Indeed! the husband only, of course, you mean?"

"No, not that either, though I make no doubt you have your enemies too; I allude to your charming wife."

"You flatter me too highly, my dear madam; who can be weak enough to envy her?"

"Do you know—but there, I have a great mind not to tell, but set you guessing; you will be in tortures of curiosity, and seeking magnetic communion with every lady you meet, to discover the suffering fair one—but no."

"Oh! pray, tell me," he cried, interrupting her.

"Let me complete my correction; the lady is *not* fair."

"A brunette! I rejoice; I adore dark women."

"Ah! this *badinage* is very good; but Lady Montgomery's fair hair, and blue eyes, tell tales against you."

"Never judge a man's taste by his wife; the diable, or Jove, prompts us into a living, witnessing fib against our real, professed taste. I really dislike fair women, in general. Tell me who the brunette is."

"Fancy, then," she lowered her voice. "I would not name it, were you not a loving, happy husband, and long may you be so. Fancy I was at Mrs. Adair's the day your marriage took place; we were all sitting quietly at work or reading, when Mr. Adair burst into the room, with a delight, I confess I was not prepared for, to announce your marriage."

"In what could my marriage be unpleasing to Mr. Adair?" he suspiciously inquired—a thought of the *dénouement* of the tale not for an instant striking him, only an old, faint idea about Kate and Adair crossing his mind.

"Oh! you know persons always make impossible matches, when two are located beneath the same roof; and young Adair and Miss Bateman were by many supposed to be engaged, from the evident affection existing between them; but *I* always knew *that* never would be a match—Mrs. Adair was far too proud a woman."

"On my soul, Mrs. Bruce," he said, haughtily, "I think Lady Montgomery might be Mrs. Adair, and her husband and family proud of her."

"Good Heavens, Sir Philip!" she cried, in seeming horror of herself. "What have I said? What a very stupid woman I am; fancy my forgetting that Miss Bateman had become your wife! Pray, pardon me."

"I am too justly proud of my wife, Mrs. Bruce, to admit any feeling but mercy and charity in this our scarcely passed *lune de miel.* I forgive, but on condition that you continue the tale, so flattering to my vanity, though I cannot possibly guess the fair lady."

"Do I not tell you she is dark?"

"Well then, dark—O heavens!" and he laughed aloud. "I see the jest now. I met a black girl one day at Mrs. Adair's, ugly as sin; dark as an African. Is she my capture?"

"The maid? Oh no! What say you to the mistress?"

"What do you mean, Mrs. Bruce?" he was pale, calm, and serious in an instant.

"Listen and judge; it is to me the most inexplicable case, shewing how wayward some girls are. Mr. Adair rushed in, and set us guessing who was married—none could. When he named your name, Sir Philip, I never shall forget the wild agonizing cry which burst from Miss Lincoln. She sprang up almost shrieking, and then fell back, and of course there was a most painful scene of salts—*sal volatile, et cetera.*" She paused, but he [illegible] word. Some thoughts are born dumb, [illegible]; but, oh! how they wring the heart [illegible] birth—deep as a mother's sorrow, [illegible] speechless child.

Sir Philip did not know Mrs. Bruce even for her tale-bearing character, and much less her love of giving pain. She envied all, especially the young and fair, in their marriages, as she was resolved to be considered a victim in her own. Hate of poor Kate Bateman urged her to work on his vanity, lest he should love the girl too much—a little regret for another might admirably counteract this.

"I tell you this," she whispered, "now you are one of us married folks, that you may not encourage any weak, mawkish sentiment in a very wilful girl I think, by too much kindness or pity on your part—she really loves you; so now keep that secret in your heart, and check her, should she be unable to conceal it, for your poor wife's sake. I consider her just the kind of wild, ungovernable girl, who would die for love."

Sir Philip was perfectly silent; thought—heavy thought was plodding through his brain.

"For goodness' sake, who talks of dying for love?" asked Elton, who was roaming about the rooms in a desultory manner peculiarly his own, dropping into every coterie or *tête-à-tête*, in many instances a perfect marplot, yet on the whole he did much good, interrupting many a tale of pleasant scandal, and this was the motive of this strange, but most philanthropic man. Convinced that Mrs. Bruce *could* say nothing beneficial to Sir Philip's ear, he dropped in upon them.

"Only a jest, my dear Mr. Elton," quickly replied Mrs. Bruce, "we were supposing a case."

"Pray, never suppose any thing half so unsatisfactory as any girl dying for love," laughed Elton.

"Are you sceptical in such a possibility?" asked Mrs. Bruce. Sir Philip was perfectly silent and thoughtful, bad signs for his wife's happiness.

"Whether sceptical or not, is a matter of no moment," answered Elton; "the question is, the satisfaction attending such an event. Nothing could possibly ever be more devoid of interest, than committing an act of such egregious folly. There might be some satisfaction in creeping into a corner to die, like a wounded bird, if you were certain of being discovered, drawn to light, and having the posthumous triumph of a verdict—'Died for love!' But those matter-of-fact persons, coroners and juries, would be sure to sit upon the body (the very term is anti-poetic), quite unmindful of sympathy with the broken heart within, and, after a variety of ignoble questions, probably bring in a verdict of, 'Died of indigestion, caused by Welsh rabbit, oysters, or some other light supper,' thus leaving a never-to-be-effaced stain on the memory."

"Ah! Mr. Elton," began Mrs. Bruce, then turning suddenly, exclaimed, "Where's Sir Philip?"

Sir Philip had caught sight of the long rich curls of raven hair, streaming over Mariam's olive shoulders, and without another possible act, even of common politeness, brushed through the crowd to rejoin her, *he forgot he was married in the joy of meeting her.* Oh! woe to the returning memory!

Elton saw him glide away; he was a man who seemed endowed with Argus faculties; he had succeeded in separating him and Mrs. Bruce, the rest he was indifferent about, in his ignorance.

CHAPTER II.

When Adair and Kate had concluded their quadrille, he led her quietly towards a seat, deeply wounded by her manner. He imagined the Kate of his sincere regard merged into the mere heartless woman of fashion; too much elated by her present position to care for a memory, or trace of the sweet, homely affection which once drew them so powerfully towards one another. Viewing her in this light, a kind of contempt gathered round his heart for her; and in this mood he listlessly led her forward. Who may depict her feelings? She, far too indifferent to worldly state ever to have married Sir Philip unless from some powerful motive, and this one strong enough to make her rush headlong into marriage with a man, scarcely more than a cipher in her eyes. This motive, which had guided all her actions for weeks, ever since her union; this sole desire of meeting Adair again on his own ground, in his own circle, had in a few short minutes become a blank, a deception, and disappointment. She had hoped, in her perversely biassed mind, to read regret, jealousy, revenge, every passion in his heart, on their meeting; and nothing was visible, even to her strained sight, but affectionate joy—the satisfaction of a brother; for his few words of seeming regret

faded beneath the kindly sorrowing words succeeding them. Oh! there are moments when we give a loose to the wild, frenzied passions of our hearts—that we indeed lose the Promethean fire from heaven; the chastening fire which purifies, and we sink down into the mere earthworm, generated in slime and mud.

Kate was in the almost frantic mood which makes a woman forget all; her hope, deferred so long, was ashes burnt to whitened dust on her lip, which every breath blew farther from her.

A few straggling observations fell from them as they crossed the rooms. Adair felt so galled that he longed to rid his arm of her weight, and was anxiously seeking some one to lend their aid; and, despite all, she clung to that arm, feeling that, once relinquished, it might never be regained. She *saw* he was anxious to leave her, and her trembling eyelids could scarcely restrain the tears beneath them. The passage to a seat where she would be left, was as one over burning brands; each succeeding step pained more than the preceding one. Her pride at last was quelled, and the lip parted to beg a respite, when some one held a hand towards her, and a friendly voice said—"Kate, I am very happy in congratulating Lady Montgomery."

This was Mrs. Adair, who in her heart, so weak but so far from bad, was rejoiced at her good fortune; that is, she was delighted this evening, but to-morrow the weak mind would let all good evaporate from its incapacity to retain it, and a milk-and-water indifference succeed.

"Come, and sit by me, my child, and tell me all about yourself."

Lady Montgomery was for the moment Kate, Richard's playfellow.

"Angelina is somewhere here!" exclaimed Mrs. Adair, searching round; "let us go to her—she will be delighted to see you." Poor woman, she really thought so!

Kate looked up in Adair's face as his mother was seeking with her *lorgnon* for Angelina; that look was one of the olden, happy time of confidence and affection. It said so beseechingly, "Stay by me in my annoyance," that he pressed her arm involuntarily, and led her to where his mother had detected her daughter.

Angelina shook her hand almost warmly—she had a motive in conciliating Kate. This was to pain and wound Mariam, if possible, whom she believed annoyed about Sir Philip's marriage.

Kate dropped into a seat, trembling lest Adair should leave them. Again their eyes met—their peace was half made—better have been left at the half-way; it is a dangerous "whole" for two who should not love. He smiled as he sat down beside her, and his mother separated her from Angelina; but this separation availed little—her voice could not be stilled. There was scarcely a word she uttered that had not some [illegible] meaning, to pain. Adair saw this, and, with [illegible] he was master of, endeavoured to avert the [illegible]; but one was reserved for her he could not [illegible] this was the most unexpected vision, at a

short distance, of Mariam leaning on Sir Philip's arm! Adair saw them first—his look of amazement directed Angelina's attention, who exclaimed in well-feigned satisfaction—

"Miss Lincoln and Sir Philip! I am truly happy to see that."

Kate stared at her. Adair knew his sister too well not to fear treason—he merely responded quietly, "What is there so wonderful in it?" He endeavoured to catch her eye, but she would not look—she was resolved to leave no excuse for them to blame her indiscretion, which should appear the effect of candour!

"Kate, did you like Florence?" he asked, to stop the other if possible.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Angelina, drowning all reply by her hilarity; "you have the most wretched memory, Richard—you must recollect a very good and substantial reason why I feel pleased and surprised at the very good understanding existing between Sir Philip and—"

"Hush! Angelina," said her mother in an audible whisper, at the same time directing a glance at poor Kate. The mother was deceived. She really thought her child had forgotten Lady Montgomery's alliance with Sir Philip.

Adair saw all, and harshly and pointedly said, "Angelina, you might find some more amusing subjects for Lady Montgomery than mere foolish discussion, now forgotten, between her husband and your mother's ward. Mariam is a little too susceptible sometimes."

"I certainly *had* forgotten," answered his sister;

"but really we do not yet understand one another. I am dreadfully curious. Was the rejection on account of some susceptibility on Miss Lincoln's part?"

Kate had been looking from one to the other, puzzled, speechless, lost.

"Pray, enlighten me," she said at last; "I certainly have a right to know what interests Sir Philip."

"Let us speak in the past tense, Lady Montgomery, and hope other things for the present." Thus spake Angelina.

"By Heavens, Angelina!" cried her brother indignantly, "you are mad—or, I will scarcely venture to insinuate, worse. Why speak of this? Don't mind any thing, dear Katty," and he turned affectionately towards her. "You are a loved and happy wife now; so laugh the envy of the world to scorn!"

"Richard—tell me all!" whispered she with an excited, agonized countenance.

"If by 'envious' you allude to me, sir," said Angelina indignantly, "I cast back the name on those who may merit it. Lady Montgomery should be grateful for any chance which has made her the wife of so excellent a man as, I doubt not, Sir Philip is; at the same time, learn a Christian virtue, humility, by being perfectly well assured that she does not owe her present position to any overweening merit of her own. Pride is so great a vice, I——"

What the "I" would have been the preface to, is uncertain; for Adair sprung up, and, hastily drawing Kate's arm beneath his own, said, "When we need

sermons we will enter a church; when we require a lesson of humility or Christian charity, it will not be to Miss Adair we shall come."

"For mercy's sake, Richard, tell me what it means!" cried Kate, clinging to his arm; she felt a presentiment of deep deception and annoyance.

"Only this," he replied, kindly; "you are not fool enough to suppose, in marrying Sir Philip, that he had never dreamed of another before you; the fact is, he had half proposed, something between jest and earnest, one evening at the opera, to Mariam Lincoln." He tried to soften facts.

"To *her!*" shuddered Kate—"to *her!*—ever, ever, Miss Lincoln!"

"Never mind it, dear Katty; you were not very sentimentally in love with the man, and now you are both happy. Never mind."

"But, Richard!" she cried, almost raising her voice in weeping, "I like him—almost loved him lately—he has been kind to me and my poor old father, and gratitude makes greater way sometimes in the heart than a girl's mad love. It is a stable thing to build upon—a rock, Richard."

And the envied, proud Lady Montgomery, let tear after tear fall unchecked on the flowers she held in her hand, and there they fell, gems of dew—such tears as angels weep in sorrow over a sister spirit, lost to their home!

Kate felt as if her soul of peaceful contentment was fled and lost. "He was a refuge to me, in the affection

I bore him, from other thoughts; I tried so much not to think, but love him." All this she passionately uttered to his agitated—"Hush! hush!—dearest Kate."

And now—now only to have been chosen in *pique* to another!—a *pis aller*, a burden to him the day he becomes reconciled to *that other!*—"Have mercy on me, O my God!" whispered the trembling woman, bending over her flowers to conceal her anguish. "Have mercy!—for I did not marry him all for pride or vanity, but for my poor dear father's sake; and—and—" The thought, too, of another reason, why she had married, rushed across her mind, and the crushed woman bowed her head lower, and acknowledged, "I am punished!—but have mercy, O my God!"

Adair had hurried her to the embrasure of a window, before her mastering agitation would have betrayed her to the crowd.

"Now I think of it," he said hastily; "you knew something of this before your marriage; I mentioned to you Sir Philip's (I called it by a strong term) attachment to Mariam in the letter I wrote you, in my anxious fear lest you might be led into danger by his professions of love."

"What letter, Richard?" asked the bewildered woman, looking up in his face, bent so feelingly towards her.

"Katty, Katty," and he tried to force a smile from her by smiling, "*I* ought to feel wounded now by your indifference to my epistles, by your forgetfulness and careless reading, as I did at the time by your silence."

"Richard, what *do* you mean?" and she clasped his hand—"When did you write? Where? About what?"

A few brief words explained all.

"I never saw it, never received it, Richard; and, oh! far better not have known this *now*," was her trembling reply.

Here was the case wherein Colonel Maberly's ubiquity of vision was called into activity. A few days after this conversation, an affrighted slipshod servant admitted the fact of the burnt letter, when told that government had taken it up.

And Adair rode thoughtfully, half regrettingly, homewards, when he reflected that, *perhaps*, but for this misadventure, Lady Montgomery might still be Kate Bateman, and he not so lonely at heart as he now felt. So much for the prudence of a brotherly explanation, in the embrasure of a window, in a ball-room.

But we will return there, though not to Kate yet.

Mariam's mind and heart were too good and pure, in the first place, to bear ill-will, or any thing like a morose feeling; she could but feel kindly and gratefully towards Sir Philip, who had evinced so sincere a regard for herself. Only fools laugh at affection sincerely avowed; however humble, it is always a compliment. How much more, then, the regard of a man like Sir Philip? Now she felt convinced he had mistaken his own heart, or else been one of those men resolved upon committing matrimony, and perhaps, from caprice of the moment, had awarded her the first choice. Under this

impression, when he advanced towards her, veiled by Mrs. Bruce's representations from seeing clearly and truthfully, he read in her first awkwardness and heightened colour, a confirmation of the mendacious tale. In her subsequent gentleness and kindness of manner, both of which were *amendes* for her previous conduct, and grateful acknowledgment of his generosity, he read an irrepressible pleasure in his society even now; but, at the same time, he did her ample justice in feeling assured that her principles would ever war against her affection. Neither had he any contemplated idea of wronging her; nothing beyond the pleasure of being in the society of one whom he tenderly loved still, and by whom he deemed himself to be deeply regretted. Mariam confirmed him in his error, by scarcely alluding to his marriage more than by a cold inquiry about Lady Montgomery, who was personally a stranger to her: the subject was naturally too painful a one to her, to be much touched upon. She felt, nevertheless, a pleasure in his society; for there was a gentlemanly gentleness and kindness of manner, which soon set her at ease; and with all the loneliness of heart Adair's estrangement caused her, the want of sympathy from any, even from Mrs. Wilton, who was ever censuring her rejection of this very man, it will not seem strange that she should gladly accept the generous forgiveness, as she fancied it, of Sir Philip, and thus conversing with freedom, and evidently mutual pleasure, they passed arm-in-arm close to the window where stood Kate and Adair. The latter endeavoured to divert

Kate's attention, but her quick eye detected them, and a scowl passed over her face, as quickly succeeded by a cold, contemptuous smile of bitterness, not unmingled with regret. The look echoed her last words to Adair.

"Better not have known this *now!*" for she personified the woman who had clung to the faithless weeds on a river's bank, which remained evidences in her hand, raised in despair, of the vain struggle she had made for salvation.

The lights are dying in their sockets, the chalked floors have no vestiges of wreaths of flowers and mythological figures; light feet have effaced them—light feet, and heavy hearts, perchance.

The rich mirrors give no more back the glowing look or radiant smile we awarded, by its reflecting influence, to the one beside us, we durst not look up to. All is still, save the step of a solitary domestic, who in drowsy mood extinguishes the fading lamps, treads on fallen flowers, looks on the mirrors—poor slaves, obliged to yield to all, the base as well as the beautiful, and reflect back deformity as well as heaven's gorgeous moulding of loveliness. He passes on; all is darkness and solitude—emblems of the two hearts which entered those rooms in affection, to quit them in estrangement, suspicion, almost hatred—such was the fate of Sir Philip and Lady Montgomery.

CHAPTER III.

SOME short time had elapsed since the ball in our last chapter, and events were crowding fast on one another. There are demons for the coarse, demons for the refined. Those grasp roughly in a hind's grasp, and hurry you forward over rocks and stones, where your hobnailed shoes will secure you from wound. These come in courtly garb, with frilled ruffles and pearl-emblazoned gloves, and gently touch your hand, to invite you to follow whither they lead. Such a one, invisible spirit, rode bodkin in the carriage homewards with Sir Philip and his wife; and gently pressing her hand as she stepped forth, in sympathizing fervour for all the wrongs she had sustained, he felt the pressure returned. It needed no more; so he held the not unwilling fingers in his own, and beside her entered her husband's halls, and there took up his abode, feeling his services would be needed, and amply repaid.

It is morning, and in a quiet, half darkened, but cheerful room, sits poor Bateman, in a capacious chair; all speaks of comfort and wealth around him. Looking in, one would fancy it a child's room, or, at best, a youth's study. The table is covered with puzzles, dissected maps, mathematical instruments, and curious

toys; from the window are suspended various cages of foreign birds, *etagères* of flowers. In short, every thing which could by possibility amuse a mind, forced to seek employment in its most innocent capacities,—a mind sent back to begin its course again, like some child in a game of forfeits. Thus it was with Bateman at present; books were denied him, light too, except partially obscured; seldom permitted to quit this and the adjoining apartment, lest the promised sight should never quite be restored; and thus an affectionate, ever-watchful child had ransacked every bazaar, every possible repository, to find amusement for the not too patient sufferer.

On this morning, more restless than usual, he tossed thing after thing from before him; those which would once have amused his leisure, even in robust health, now were cast aside with an impatient gesture. A hand quietly turned the handle of the door, and a gentle step glided in; it was Kate—all Kate still to him. The tutor's daughter has nothing changed with state and wealth, simple in her dress as ever; perhaps the material may be more costly, but she is unchanged in the quiet good taste which characterised her. A plain pretty muslin wrapper flows around her, the *coiffure* alone is different; instead of the careless though becoming, and not untidy hair, irregularly arranged, as when she sate in the little rhubarb parlour, the day Sir Philip first called at Brixton, a French maid has placed every particular hair in order, and a pretty simple cap half conceals its beauty, and certainly does not deteriorate from hers.

"Dearest father," she whispered, fondly kissing his cheeks and forehead, both arms around his neck, "how are you to-day? Have you passed a tranquil night? Your eyes do not pain you, do they?"

"No, Kate—no!" was the querulous reply, as he almost struggled from her gentle embrace in nervous impatience. "But it would be far better, I am sure, if they pained me—there would be some chance of restoration; whereas, here I have been so many weeks now in almost darkness, and all improvement at a stand-still! It will be dreadful to pass one's life in this partial blindness, with only these foolish things for society." And he indignantly pushed away a host of her purchases of the previous day.

"Think, dear father," was the patient reply, "how many never see the light, and how many have been blessed with sight only to lose it; and oh! how doubly to be pitied such are. You were deprived of total sight awhile, to have it restored, that you might be taught the blessing it bestows; let us bless Heaven for so much loving you, to shew you its power, and not use it arbitrarily."

Kate had never been instructed in any thing religious; but there was the innate bias of a refined mind, making her naturally turn from many beautiful things, to do homage to the most beautiful.

"I *am* grateful, Kate," he hastily answered; but the tone was no proof of that feeling. "Only my restoration is very slow; how long have you been married?"

"Two months," was the brief answer, and a cold look of regret stole over her face, very unlike a joyous bride.

"Then you must remember it was a month before, that the operation was performed, and then they told me I should have my sight directly."

"Three months is not so *very* long a time," said his child, still caressing him, and endeavouring to beguile him of a smile.

"Not *very* long," answered he in an irritated tone. "I dare say it does not appear so to you, gadding about to balls and pleasures; but to me, poor blind old man, left alone in my darkness, don't you think it seems an age?" and he pushed her away. Kate stood half-hidden behind him, her hands pressing over her face to conceal the working sorrow traced there. Bateman saw nothing, heard nothing; and then, too, we grow so selfish in bodily suffering—in mental, we seek companionship and sympathy.

"I wish you would take those birds out of the room," continued the nervous man; "they weary me to death by their noise, and I *cannot see them.*" Nothing can convey an adequate idea of the hopelessness his tone conveyed in pronouncing these words. Kate, already worn in spirit by her own troubles, sobbed as she proceeded to obey, and remove the little fluttering creatures the poor man had begged her to procure him some days before, that their song might break the monotony of his dulness. Her hands trembled violently as she

raised them towards the cages, but she forebore one complaint.

"And all these puzzles, and children's toys," he continued, hastily brushing them from before him. "I am not childish yet, only a suffering old man and blind—quite blind!" With the last words he commenced weeping like a child.

Poor Kate could bear it no longer; for there is perhaps nothing more painful to behold than tears gushing from the blind—eyes which cannot see, and yet have the power left of conveying a sense of sorrow.

She hastily replaced the unhooked cage, and, rushing towards him, dropped on her knees at his feet, and, clasping his hands, looked up with streaming eyes at his tearful, half-shaded ones.

"Don't, dear father—pray, don't;" she cried; "you will break my heart; you do not know all I may have to suffer. Oh, let me find peace with you!"

"Sir Philip is kind to you, is he not?" he asked.

"Yes; oh yes! but I mean your illness; I am not well myself—I am nervous, and——"

"You should check such feelings, Kate," he interrupted. "They are very foolish; and what can you have to make you sad or sorrowful? And, as to being ill, pray don't give way to that idea; what would become of me if you were ill?" and already, at the thought, he fidgeted nervously in his chair.

"I will not give way," she calmly answered. His selfishness dried up the torrent of her grief; she felt *he*, at all events, never could comprehend her.

"Let us speak composedly of your sight," she said, rising from her knees and sitting beside him. "You know, dear father, you have had the best advice, the first oculist in London, and all agree that only patience is necessary for your perfect restoration."

"That is just what I do not think. I believe Mr. Gray took less interest in me than he would have done in a rich or titled man. I think he——"

"For shame, father!" she cried, rising in irrepressible disgust; "say what you will of others, think what you please of me, much as it wounds and grieves me, but spare one who, when we were in poverty, acted so nobly towards us. I am certain that, like all generous hearts, he is more anxious about you, because no interest guides his attentions."

Kate's baby face was lit up with an expression little short of sublime, as she spoke in defence of one claiming all her respect.

"You yourself told me he was fee'd now," was the half-sullen reply.

"True, Sir Philip insisted upon it, and now Mr. Gray could not refuse without insulting him; but it was the first act in our poverty we should remember, and *I* shall never forget it. Come, dear father," she added, changing her tone to one of forced cheerfulness, "own you are a little cross to-day; and, like all invalids, the more so that returning strength enables you to exert your energy. Now, I am sure you see clearer than yesterday. Mr. Gray said every hour would show an improvement; now, tell me," and she moved to the

other side of the table placed between them, "how many fingers do I hold up."

Bateman lifted up the head which had been sunken on his breast, and the hope guiding him, in spite of his moroseness, of proving himself better, he strained his vision to reckon the white fingers distended before him; after a few instants' survey, he counted exactly the five held up to view.

"And now," she exclaimed, moving a few steps farther off.

"Three," was the quick answer.

"And what colour is my dress, father?"

"Blue," he replied, after a longer pause.

"Ah! dear, dear father," and her arms were round his neck, "you see how very naughty you are! You are a spoilt child; for the other day you did not once correctly answer me, neither could you perceive a glaring pink dress, while to-day a pale blue is distinct to your improving vision."

A smile at last repaid all her patient care, the man was so well pleased to be convinced his sight was improving; and before she quitted him, which was not until the morning papers had been read to him, and many little offices of love performed, which a loving daughter so well knows how to make acceptable, he not only smiled peacefully upon her, but begged her to leave the little birds, they sang so sweetly, and the trifles on the table, too, they were very amusing, as he could not read, and thus he sank into a calm sleep, when, beckoning his attendant, an intelligent, well-educated young

person, into the room from an adjoining one, Lady Montgomery glided noiselessly out, and, as the door closed, the comedy of playfulness was played, and the woman moved slowly and thoughtfully away.

Sir Philip sat in the study, attempting to fix his attention upon a book as his wife entered—a mutual feeling of want of ease, passed over both, when they found themselves in a *tête-à-tête*. He, however, looked up from his book and smiled—one of those smiles (grimaces and hypocrisy to the soul) which cost us so much in leaden weight from the violent effort to sustain them.

"Ah, 'tis you, Kate!" was his welcome. "I thought you were going to sit with your father."

"I have been sitting with him," was the cold reply. A short fortnight previously, "dear Philip" and a smile would have accompanied it.

"I hope you are not learning to neglect him by abridging your visits. Poor old man! never forget him amidst other newer pleasures, Kate."

"I trust no one will ever have to reproach me with such an act," she answered with some asperity; his tone displeased her.

"New scenes, new duties, or pleasures, often influence the best hearts, Kate, especially for awhile, and during that while the forgotten, suffer."

"Truly, Sir Philip!" she laughed derisively, "you are in a moralizing mood to-day! Have you been making your morning study a sermon?—or, I ask—merely knowing the title of such a work—'the whole duty of man,' for you seem in vigour on the topic?"

"Permit me to feel that you speak full lightly of duties; they are sacred things."

"If, Sir Philip, none forget theirs before I do mine to my father, I will first say, as the holiest and dearest, our consciences may be at rest. And a dutiful child, generally, is considered the best security for a wife's fulfilling hers."

"On my life! I do not recognise you of late, at home or abroad."

"As how at home?" she sarcastically inquired. "If you mean by my silence in your presence, I admit it; but it has been from courtesy, not to disturb your studies. You were perusing that book all the while we sate at breakfast to-day, and, assuredly, its pages must be of refined ore, requiring good weighing, not to lose their value; for, by my cursory glance, I perceive you are at the same page you had turned nearly two hours ago." Sir Philip reddened as he closed the book. "And," she continued, "during that time, I have been endeavouring to comfort and amuse my poor father, whom I have left asleep—his best happiness—until it please Heaven to restore his sight."

She spoke with a degree of feeling that touched her husband.

"Pardon me, Kate, I am irritable this morning; but I returned late, and did not pass a very excellent night."

"Were you at your club?"

"No—that is—yes, at first—and there I met Adair; in fact, we dined together with those fellows I was engaged to, and afterwards we went to Eaton Square."

"We? What, all of you?" And the wife's pride rose at the thought of Mariam; but her gently-uttered sigh was for the other he had named—jealousy that others might see what she was not permitted to behold.

"Oh, no!" he carelessly answered, "only Adair and myself."

"I thought you told me you were engaged to accompany them to a box at the Haymarket?"

"So I had promised; but it was a dreadful bore, so I got out of it, and went home with him."

"Do you know, Sir Philip, 'tis a charming bud of promise to a young wife of only two months, your love of a quiet, domestic family circle: it promises, in truth, a *parterre* of roses for our future life!" her sarcastic tone pierced through all, despite herself. He looked scrutinizingly at her; but the quivering lip sought to control its curving in contempt, and the tell-tale eyes were fixed on a close survey of the Valenciennes of her handkerchief.

"It was a perfectly dull, domestic circle, as you suppose," was the answer.

"Who was there?" she asked, looking up.

"Oh, well! Mrs. and Miss Adair—and, by the way, *not* Narcissus Browne: he is never there now; what can be the reason?"

"Rejected suitors," she replied, no longer able to control some emotion, "seldom love basking in the eyes which have disdained them, and the sweetest tones have a harsh sound when they have said 'No.'"

"What do you allude to? Surely Miss Adair has not refused him? she seemed to me much attached to him." His eyes were fixed upon her."

"Possibly so; but—don't you remember an old couplet—

'Tom loves Mary passing well,
And Mary she loves Harry.
Harry he loves bonny Bell;
But finds his love miscarry.'

Miss Lincoln plays bonny Bell here, and Narcissus Browne—Harry."

"You surely do not mean that he had the presumption to address Miss Lincoln?" he hastily asked.

"*Presumption*, Sir Philip! and permit me to ask you—a man so scrupulous for duty and honour—since when was the affection of a minister of the church deemed an insult, and for a half-caste girl like Miss Lincoln! If he were, in your eyes, not unworthy Miss Adair, surely her mother's ward need not feel his offer an insult!" her whole figure and features dilated with indignation.

"On my soul, Lady Montgomery, I am at a loss to understand your manner;" but, as he spoke, he felt her words, though rather too harshly uttered, were just.

"You perhaps alluded to disparity of fortune?" she said, "as gold seems the ruling planet now; yet how such a star can shine in heaven, I know not, unless Satan grasped at one in falling, and, gilding it with his brazen touch, it has since been left wandering there to guide its votaries—wandering stars, to whom the blackness of

darkness is reserved for ever! Wandering, indeed! wandering in search of peace and happiness, are *all* who choose mere wealth as a comforter;" she dropped her tone to one of deep melancholy.

"Lady Montgomery, your tone is flattering, it implies much," and he gazed coldly and scrutinizingly upon her.

"There may be holy thoughts, sanctifying influences, even in marrying for wealth," was her reply.

"Do you think so? even, perhaps, as Eugene Aram committed murder, for the sake of prosecuting study."

The thought of her father, of why she had *chiefly* married Sir Philip, and the memory of her love for Adair, hopeless as it was, came sadly over her spirit, and calmed it to peace—the peace of a good action, although parent of despair in the first-named motive, and she said gently, "I know not, Philip, why we are so perverse to one another to-day; you came home late, slept ill, you say. I have been sitting with my dear father; his despondency affected me. Do not let us continue this tone. What made you stay so late?"

"We got card-playing at the club."

"I thought you were at Mrs. Adair's?"

"So I was, but it grew awfully dull, so I walked with Adair to Mrs. Wilton's, for Miss Lincoln, who had spent the day with her aunt; but somehow we missed her, she had returned in the carriage, so then we went to the club."

In speaking thus, he had not, let it be remembered, the slightest suspicion that his wife knew of his rejection by Mariam. She bit her lip to restrain a sarcastic reply.

"And when I returned," he continued, "your maid Justine told me you had retired, and begged not to be disturbed, so I forbore wishing you good-night, and remained in my apartment."

"Thank you—yes, my head ached fearfully."

There was a pause here, and Kate walked to a bookshelf to select a companion.

"By the way, Kate," he said, after a few moments' silence, "are you *particularly* attached to Justine, as an able *femme de chambre?*"

"Attached? yes, as one is to a person who knows how to arrange one's hair, and to a woman, *journalière* as I am in decent looks, to direct the days when pink, blue, or lilac may in safety be worn."

"That is exactly what I think she does *not* understand. Now your *coiffure*, for instance, it is far too stiff to my fancy; a more careless style would suit you, as it does all women better—ringlets, for example."

Kate felt her face flush; before her passed Mariam's rich, natural curls, which no art could constrain into tameness, but she answered mildly—

"You once said—that was when we were in Paris, that Justine arranged my hair to perfection, and far more becomingly than in the more negligent style in which I used to wear it."

"Ah, *negligent!*" he answered, seeking an outlet to creep through; "you had, I remember, a foolish habit, adopted by some artists and authors, of being negligent almost to excessive untidiness of dress. Some persons fancy, that to seem full of thought and genius, they

should appear like an old mouldy office, in inns of court, the occupants of which have not time even to sweep the cobwebs out of their eyes."

"Thank you," she said, forcing a smile to cover a presentiment of annoyance; "I managed, however, to clear my vision of these same cobwebs when I met you."

"Is that intended for a compliment? I will accept it as such, if you saw me clearly; I hope you read me as I deserve, that is, as regards yourself, in all kindness."

"And love?" she hastily and laughingly interrupted; but the laugh was inharmonious, and the face accompanying it out of tune from its sad expression. It is not distension of mouth which creates a smile; it is the pleasant music, æol-like, playing over the countenance with every passing breath.

"You cannot doubt that—but to return to Justine's taste and talent. You know, Kate, most young ladies entering life require a mistress' hand to direct even the purest taste. Now your dress to day. I never particularly liked blue, and to you it is singularly unbecoming."

"Really!" and she moved towards a bookcase with mirrored doors, and surveyed herself; and, as she did so, it recurred to her, that only the day before, Adair had told her how very becoming this same dress was, having called early to see her.

"Blue," she continued, "is the *éclat* of a blonde, as yellow, *le fard des brunes*."

"That's the very colour I like, and I am sure it would become you better than that disagreeable one, to

my taste. I saw the prettiest dress a day or two ago, I think, I ever saw; it was so simply made, too—pale yellow muslin, more of a buff colour, a *visite*, I think you call it, of the same, and a white crape bonnet—it was the perfection of good taste; I thought so, and you see curiously inquired all about it of the fair wearer."

"Fair? or only so in honour of her sex?"

"As the latter, I suppose we must say, though a beauty *sans contredire*—I mean Miss Lincoln."

Lady Montgomery drew herself up to the fullest height of her muscular capacity; and the empress of the world, were there such, could not have looked more sovereign contempt as she turned towards him from the mirror.

"What may become Miss Lincoln, would *not* suit me; neither do our tastes in any way agree. She is more exacting, more difficult to please; I more humble in my wishes, though perhaps, I will admit this, less wise, more devoid of taste; and what she despised and rejected, I, Sir Philip Montgomery, accepted."

And leaving the amazed man overwhelmed by her uncontrollable burst of indignation, and speechless from surprised annoyance at her knowledge of his defeat with Mariam, she majestically quitted the room, for even the girl in appearance learns dignity in insult.

CHAPTER IV.

WHAT is the world but one huge quicksand? We walk on, every moment expecting to sink in some yawning grave at our feet. We dread fixing our affections on any thing around us, lest it should in an instant sink for ever from our view. Yet on we must walk—all surface, knowing that beneath that surface the loving face is hollow and hideous, the hand we have clasped, fleshless bones; all, all deceit, and we quite as deceitful to ourselves, for we forget our own bulky weight of errors, sinking us at every step into the gulf before us. All is deceit!

And thus, some two months after the events of the past chapter, Sir Philip and Lady Montgomery, in seeming affection and unity of heart, stepped into their reserved carriage on the rail, going to pass the autumn's first month at the Grange.

The affections which might have turned to him in all sincerity—which *were* turning—by a little judicious kindness, had first (by the knowledge most galling to any woman, that she has been chosen in *pique*,) grown stern towards him, and secondly, by his ill-advised, but uncontrollable impulse, in always introducing Mariam as an example to her, become perfectly estranged from him. *No*

heart can exist without some passion, it may be one to elevate the soul, but *passion* it must be, or it will die of inanition, and the mind sink into idiotcy. The one which Kate would have exerted all her efforts to subdue, out of gratitude to her husband, while she deemed him worthy of that feeling on her part, now was indulged in without restraint, whatever better reaction might hereafter take place; for, so far from feeling grateful to Sir Philip, she almost hated him for having probably come between her and Adair; for assuredly, as he had written once, he would have done so again, and who could now calculate what the result of the meeting might have been?

Thus on life's quicksand journeyed down the Montgomeries. Her father was so much recovered that now he could dispense with the exclusive care of his child for amusement; he was permitted to read, and consequently Kate, without a self-reproach, departed for the Grange, prepared joyfully to encounter all the annoyances she foresaw there, for the reward of Adair's society, whatever danger might ensue from meeting, unprotected by any sterling virtue at heart, the man she loved so madly.

Surely it will never be reckoned to us as a mortal sin, those errors committed, however grievous they may be, when the sinner has been cast adrift on rough waters. Beauty for a figure-head, talents, genius, all which may charm the eye or fancy, as pennants floating gaily aloft before the breeze, to draw all eyes to the barque balancing herself in the sunny daylight; and beyond all

these, that generosity which leads many more into error than mere passion, from the fear of inflicting pain upon another by a stern and cold refusal—surely it will be reckoned to such, that Heaven made them worthy its creating hand, and then, by some fatality, threw them on the worldly care of those who omitted casting a mantle over all against harm or crime—the mantle of religion!

Thus it was with Kate, handsome, talented, a heart of feeling and generous warmth, but utterly devoid of all knowledge of right, beyond the worldly laws of not inflicting *open* scandal on your neighbour. This is to deny the existence of a supreme and just Being, who sees all, and will weigh, in a balance, the good and evil.

Sir Philip had asked no question of his wife as to the means by which she had obtained her information about himself and Mariam. The momentary annoyance passed, and the wound his vanity had received, burned by a little mental caustic—indifference—which seamed but did not heal the wound, he thought it better not to ask any questions, but let the matter return to its normal state of quietude, by silence; but this was as gross an error as he could have been guilty of. A little generous explanation might have produced pardon and affection, at all events respect, on her part, and in respecting him, she would have learned self-respect for his sake; but the thing, passed over in silence, left two impressions on her mind, neither conducive to love —contempt for the mind, too little as she deemed it to

court and face explanation, and hatred of the man who seemed by his silence to despise her wounded pride.

As to him, he never could forgive her proudly acknowledged disdain, and still less the implied contempt of Mariam for himself, true or false; the latter he believed, still Kate thought otherwise, and he hated her for it.

Readers—forgive us if we seem too prosy; but if you are not wedded, you may be, and why should the pen placed in our hands by fortune, *not* be better employed, as far as our limited powers enable us to employ it, than in a mere novel? We all talk of ameliorating the human race, abolishing slavery, and various very excellent things, as merchants term it, for export use; but let us first look around us and see the misery of thousands at home, and, while we read glowing pictures of the sacredness of love in the married state between *actual* slaves, cry in anguish, "Far better any slavery of body with this unity of affection, than that of two beings hating one another, and compelled to wear those chains of the mind and soul for life!" Let us seriously see if the evil may not be ameliorated, and thousands set free from sorrow, who have entered the married state full of hope and love, and who are fain to acknowledge, after perhaps a very short experience, that if in life's cup there is *sure* to be a grain of sand at the bottom, in the wedded chalice, wherefrom two loving lips should sip together, there is, too often, a deep sediment of mud!

Let us leave slavery abroad, for the generous hearts

there to abolish and destroy it, as every thing rotten and corrupted *must*, sooner or later, crumble to dust by its own rottenness, and let us *first*, at home, correct and abolish the slavery of our own passions; and while we see the mote in another's eye, *feel* we have one in our own, and so kindly take, if we give pain, to the one we have made *one* with us. Let candour step in, and NEVER pass a sorrow or grievance over unshared or unexplained; and thus the very harshest will feel the truth of the divine unity, sent down dove-like on every married couple; but, if we perversely clip the poor dove's wings, oh, then, it must grovel in the mud and earth, and farewell to all *confidence*, the true secret of married love! Married life is like Pandora's box, with this difference, there is "confidence" at the bottom; shake up all the plagues together, find *this*, and double-handed defy them; and the day this is truly discovered, feast and cherish it, and cast the whole box into the fire as *feu-de-joie*—all its torments will burn like dry twigs.

Depend upon it, *un*gentle reader, the wife who, while she tells you your faults candidly, and in a sweet quiet tone acknowledges her own, makes herself so great a part of yourself, that you *cannot* cast her from your bosom.

We have finished our homily, so we'll go into the dining-room at the Grange, and sit down beside Kate and Adair, who entered it arm-in-arm.

We fear it will be a very dull dinner, there are so many wet blankets thrown over the various chairs.

First, Sir Philip is dreadfully disconcerted at being obliged, despite much manœuvring against it on his part, to hand down Mrs. Adair, who is in a sentimental mood, having just heard, that Lord Billow has been accepted by another; consequently, she has thrown herself back on poor dead Lincoln, this being the anniversary of something or other connected with their acquaintance. There is nothing better through life for a woman of the world, than to have a publicly acknowledged cause of grief; for on it, or some memory connected with it, she casts all her ill humour, or lowness of spirits. Mariam's wardship made her father's attachment to Mrs. Adair a known fact, which there was no indelicacy in her alluding to. Now there is scarcely a more disagreeable thing, if you are sentimentally sad yourself, than to dine next a person suffering from the same malady; the two have no sort of sympathy for one another—for whilst one is talking of his or hers, the other is dying to give utterance to hers or his; or if, as in Sir Philip's case, they dare not speak it, they long to strangle the person whose chattering prevents their even thinking of their selfish sorrows. Thus, Sir Philip had to submit to the victimization of Mrs. Adair, who, sighing, began with (after looking at Mariam)—

"I cannot bear to look at that girl, she grows every day more like her poor father; and though I did not love, and in short refused him, still his premature death will be a living reproach to me all my existence. I wish to Heaven she would marry! Now there is " and forthwith she entered into a list of those who offered, those

who would be eligible, and those she *thought* Mariam not disinclined to accept!

Our readers may guess how pleasing all this, the first and last, must have been to him.

Mariam was seated next Narcissus Browne on the one hand, and Elton on the other; the former with dogged stupidity was bent upon *explaining* his letter as if it needed such! and Elton, overhearing all, cast occasional shells in from the battery of his wit, which, like cross readings, made the strangest mistakes. Around the table were many strangers, many we may never even speak of—the side-dishes of life. Angelina had yet a clinging hope about Narcissus; she was not at heart too proud to turn comforter, could he be brought to propose, and, in this anticipation, he had been invited to the Grange.

Angelina's wet blanket was in watching them, and her revenge in disturbing the most harmonious couple at table—her brother and Lady Montgomery.

Adair, in paying almost exclusive attention to Kate, must be exonerated from the shadow of an evil intention; he was sincerely attached to her, and the passion of one day had subsided, since her marriage, into a strong regard, tempered with the confidential love of a brother.

What a pity it is, too often, that people start down a long road together with these good thoughts, and at some very narrow crooked turning stands, barring all passage, a gnome with sinister aspect, who cries out,

"She is *not* your sister; you have been journeying on a false track."

So nothing remains but to turn back, and recommence, only to discover at last, alas! that the first course was the safer and better one.

"Montgomery looks cross, Kate," whispered Adair; "have you been scolding him on your journey?"

"I never scold—seldom interfere with him; he does as best suits his humour."

"I think you are wrong; you should learn to be out of temper sometimes; making up is——"

"A glass of wine, Mr. Adair?" asked Narcissus across the table, who had never, despite all intimacy, got beyond "the mister."

"Not exactly," whispered Adair to Kate, following Narcissus' interruption of his phrase. "With pleasure," he replied, bowing to the patient one, who sat staring at him glass in hand. "What an obsolete fellow he is!" continued Adair to Kate, "he does nothing else but remind us of our grandfathers' pleasure of a glass of wine."

"Any thing but that," answered she; "it is the bore of old-fashioned dinners, and the most perfect 'hope I don't intrude,' ever invented."

"An abortion, *de trop* and *mal à propos*. But we were talking of making friends."

"Don't speak of *that*," she hurriedly answered.

Adair looked fixedly at her; forgetting all the past, her downcast eyes recalled him to memory, and, glancing

up, their eyes met. Nothing more was needed; the look spoke all, and Adair grew thoughtful. He was on ground he had promised himself to avoid; yet such a wilful thing is memory, his, from one little phrase uttered, gave back all the scene between himself and Kate, which had better never have been remembered. Resolved if possible to recall her thoughts to her husband, and imagining a slight matrimonial difference of opinion had alone produced her observation in the first instance, he said—

"Come, Kate, I will not have you give way to your little warm temper, because Sir Philip has possibly been lecturing in all kindness; tell me what has occurred?"

"Better you should not know, Richard," was her answer.

"Why better? in what can it affect me, except in the annoyance it may cause you?"

"Just so, and for sympathy's sake you might feel more keenly than in prudence you ought, or I, as one much loving you, desire you should."

"What an enigma you are! Don't you know 'tis always safer to tell than set a body guessing: imagination is a beautiful or terrible gift as we use it."

"So is summer rain: it brings forth flowers, or inundates and destroys."

"Is your father perfectly recovered, Lady Montgomery?" asked Angelina across the table.

"I am happy to say, almost as well as ever," was the smiling reply.

"Montgomery, are you going to Doncaster?" asked

Adair, raising his voice, dreading some annoying question to follow on the heels of Angelina's commencement.

"I think so, that is, if——" Here he entered into a string of race-horses, and their chances, little interesting to our readers. Under the cover of this battery of "sweepstakes," "hedges," etc., Angelina continued—

"It must afford you infinite satisfaction, Lady Montgomery," (she seemed over-anxious, in repeating the name, to remind all present of the elevation bestowed upon Kate, as her subsequent observation proved,) "for it was a fearful visitation, entailing so many troubles upon you both. I assure you, you had our sincerest sympathy."

"We cannot be sufficiently grateful," was the hesitating reply. Kate knew an enemy was in ambush, and not seeing him, she was obliged to be on her guard against surprise. Poor Adair was confused almost beyond coherent answers to Sir Philip, who was infinitely relieved by the horse-racing, which carried him away from the sentimentality of a matron's peep into girlhood, where the widow's cap nods in funereal melancholy over the golden ringlets of sixteen.

Sir Philip heard nothing of the conversation between his wife and Miss Adair; he was consequently much at a loss to comprehend his colloquist's confused answers. Poor Richard! he had one ear full of horses, the other Angelina's jarring tones.

"Poor Mr. Bateman," she continued, "how delightful it must be to him to recommence his daily occupations. Has he many pupils now?"

Now Kate saw her way, and, we grieve to record it, a spirit of revenge against her husband, which could not but rebound against herself, made her enter with spirit and rejoicing into that which was intended to wound her.

"Not as yet," she answered; "his sight continues too weak to be much tried."

"'Tis indeed a pity," responded Angelina. "My dear Miss Bateman, you must feel this disaster deeply."

Kate laughed, a soft unmistakeably joyous laugh, which was even read thus by the amazed and disappointed Angelina, who had a peculiar talent for *forgetting*, when it suited her purpose to do so; absence of mind is a great gift sometimes—that is, the semblance of it—and she was one of those who, with immense pretensions to ladylike manners and good breeding, overlooked the admitted fact, that almost any rudeness may be pardoned except that at your own table, where your opponent is forced to accept any thing your wit (?) or temper may impose, by way of indigestible *entremet*.

A well-played movement of surprise, coupled with an, "Oh! I beg ten thousand pardons, Lady Montgomery, but you too well know my absence of mind to heed any thing I utter. Of course now, your father has relinquished teaching; tutorship is at all times disagreeable, doubly so when failing health and necessity make it a cruel tax on our patience."

"I, inexperienced as I am," uttered a voice almost tremulous from emotion, "must beg to disagree with Miss Adair. I can imagine it a most pleasing task to instruct the ignorant, desirous of acquiring knowledge, or to cultivate the minds overgrown with weeds, which strew abroad the seeds of impertinence, jealousy, and ill-breeding."

To the amazement of more than one, the speaker was Mariam, whose dark flashing eyes lit up the whole countenance with supreme, unrepressed contempt.

The guests were not so numerous but that all, more or less, understood the passing scene, coming so immediately under their observation.

"Worthy of you!" whispered Elton, in a voice of triumph; for none so well read the natural antipathy between Lady Montgomery and Mariam.

Angelina was speechless, her evil had recoiled on herself; for a moment, Kate was too much agitated to reply. Generous and noble-hearted herself, she felt all the other's generosity, where her conscience accused her of more than once lately treating her with coldness and undisguised dislike.

The words uttered, Mariam grew calm and listless as usual, all power of energetic exertion seemed for ever departed; for, take hope from us, what are we?

Kate, roused at last, flushed with surprised gratitude; her eyes lit on Mariam's, theirs crossed in a glance, where soul bows to soul, and then the cold blighting wind of the lower earth came over both, and while one

regretted her involuntary indignation at the insult to an unoffending woman, the other grieved to feel herself under an obligation to a rival, twice one, as she dreaded.

What we relate was the act of an instant. Adair, speechless with suppressed rage which he could not give vent to, stopped suddenly in the middle of a speech, making the whole affair more obvious, and Sir Philip, who had heard nothing, asked, "What is the matter?"

"Simply," Kate hastily answered, recovering herself, by the evil promptings which made her pain and abase her husband's pride, "that Miss Adair, in all kind anxiety, is desirous of knowing whether my father is sufficiently restored to resume his teaching, and then apologizes for supposing that *now* he should exercise his talents as tutor; to which I reply, that Mr. Bateman has too much proper pride to owe his subsistence even to his daughter's husband, while Heaven gives him power to eat his honestly earned bread in peace and independence."

The first prompting feeling in commencing, gave way to a quiet dignity, before which even her galled husband bowed in respect.

Angelina's speech brought annoyance upon herself in more ways than she had imagined it could. Narcissus, on whom her purposes matrimonial were still bent, heard all, and, leaning across the table, said, pleasantly smiling—

"Ah, my dear Miss Adair! I fear from your speech,

that poor tutors do not rank highly in your estimation. I am sorry for it, for how many of us ill-salaried curates are obliged, with large families perchance, to eke out existence, by becoming tutors?"

"But such is not your case, Mr. Browne," laughed Lady Montgomery; "speak not of yourself as a family man before the breaking hearts, perhaps even here, sighing to win your affections. I am right in so saying, am I not, Miss Adair? and pray, dear madam," she continued, still addressing that lady, "dispel by your usual gaiety and urbanity the passing cloud cast over your mother's guests, or else they may fancy themselves surrounded by needy tutors, their wives and daughters."

The repartees were becoming far too *piquantes* to be in perfect good breeding. Mrs. Adair was not a person to draw any out of the quagmire of an unpleasant discussion, by ease of manner, or a quiet changing of the conversation. Elton, however, did it as it best might be done, in seriously asking a question, so perfectly irrelevant and stupid, that, coupled with the comical expression of his face, the table, friends and foes, united in a hearty laugh, the intention was so obvious.

"Angelina," he said, reaching forward, "is it a fact, in your Sunday schools, that every child has to bring its own mug with its name on it? and have you ever known a case where an infant was iniquitous enough to purloin its companion's crockery?"

The laugh subsided, and with it the others felt almost humbled in their own littleness, which had made

them stoop to pointed rudeness at a guest's and host's table. The tide was turned, and with it came in smoother waters in appearance, but those whose depth might overwhelm more than one there, trusting to their surface of glass.

CHAPTER V

A DAY or two placed things on a standing at the Grange, perfectly comprehensive to all there; it was the geographical puzzle of the first day put together, every piece fitting—islands, continents, oceans, all were in order on the table.

Adair had made a vain attempt to attach himself to Mariam, by thanking and justly praising her defence of Kate; but this was the worst start he could have made to win in the race, for it implied far too much interest in Lady Montgomery, and her annoyances. So Mariam *chassée* him by her cold manner, and took up her defensive position against any further attacks, between what she deemed two safe men, Sir Philip and Elton, as esquires. Kate unhesitatingly placed herself under Adair's wing as her *cavalière servante*, casting few thoughts on Sir Philip, beyond a greater estrangement every day from him, coupled with bitter contempt for Mariam, whom she regarded as a heartless, unprincipled flirt.

As to the others, they did as they pleased: there were beaux and belles, flirting, loving, jilting, and showing off, in tight-fitting jackets and shortened petticoats, in archery meetings on the lawn: and one of these we

will attend. Kate was there of course, and well she looked in her green dress and archer's cap, from beneath which her golden hair glittered in the autumnal sun. She had dropped aside, having passed her turn, and beside her stood the one who seldom left her—Adair. There were many adverse things urging him on towards danger and ruin for both, and without any inclination on his part to lead Kate astray; his feelings were those of an attached brother, but such are very dangerous where no actual tie of blood unites two who well might love. Kate thought of nothing but the pleasure of being in his society; the rest was indifferent to her. Of actual *guilt* she did not dream, which made her case the more dangerous; for the heart will often dwell on harm, until it becomes so familiarized with the idea, that as much disgust ensues, as if the deed had been committed, and abandonment, change, shame, all combined to make the soul shrink from the degraded mortality. The first view of a guilty passion brings so much allurement with it, that the unreflecting heart grasps at the shadow of delight, which, like those figures playing on a wall, thrown there by the flickering blaze of a fire, seem other than what they really are, till reason seeks for cause, and we discover our deception fatally, and too late; for shadows pass, but the scorching flame of guilty love leaves a scar for ever on the heart. Two more in danger than Adair and Kate, were never thrown together; for both had wrongs and slights to avenge against those to whom their mutual love would bring shame and sorrow, but neither

thought of more than the present pleasure of each other's society.

And, while the ringing laugh ran through the gay company on the lawn, where was Mariam? Poor, susceptible Mariam, driven by her own diffidence, and want of confidence in her own powers of affording pleasure to any, into utter loneliness!

She stood at her bed-room window, facing the lawn; her face, concealed by the curtains, was pressed against the glass, and the sad eyes followed every movement of Kate and Adair, as the former bounded across the green, like a fire-fly in the sun, all joyousness and beauty.

Mariam watched and watched, and poor Leah, who had of late been so little sought by her mistress, from the dread her words had inspired her with, stood breathless behind the bed, watching too. Mariam's suppressed emotions of late had puzzled the girl, and she doubted whether her mistress loved or hated Adair; to her own wild, uncontrollable passions, this subdued suffering, for she saw she suffered, was a perplexing riddle.

"Me must know," she whispered to herself, "Leah must know, and den him act, when him see de way clear, but clear, berry clear. Missy no speak nebber now."

"Oh! would that I were fair, like her!" burst at length from the aching heart; "for then, though he might never love, he would not feel repulsion to me when I approached him! We cannot control our an-

tipathies; it is so common a one too, the dislike to darker blood than our own. I know he has tried to overcome this feeling as unkind and unchristian; but, despite his efforts, it breaks forth, and now his undisguised affection for that fair woman shows how much it must have cost him to have been my companion, even the little time he has been. Would that I were European! even though plain—plain as the plainest! Poor—oh! poor enough to labour for my bread; for then, *if* we even met, it would not be with prejudice and disgust on his part. 'Poor black little girl!' ay, go hide yourself, and not dare bask in his eyes and the sun of day, like that fair thing there, poor butterfly!" And, unintentionally, she applied to Kate the epithet she so well deserved; for the lamp was unguarded, unshaded, round which she was playing.

If we could hear the opinions of ourselves uttered in our absence, how many an excellent lesson we should learn; humility to the proud, exaltation to the lowly.

"Mrs. Adair, where is your handsome ward?" asked one man who had been seeking Mariam every where. "One never sees her except at dinner, or something impossible for her to escape from. She is a perfect violet, hidden from view."

"'Gad, worse than any such! Those you may find by displacing their modest leaves, but Miss Lincoln, never! Is she studious? or a misanthrope *femelle?*" inquired another.

"Indeed, I can scarcely tell you," was Mrs. Adair's

answer. "I have vainly endeavoured to understand her; she is seldom two days alike in mood."

"I think her one of the handsomest girls I ever beheld," continued the first speaker; "there is a richness of beauty in her *brunette* tint, such as I never saw equalled, even amongst the ladies of Spain."

"I confess she is *rather* too dark for my taste," said Angelina, joining the group on Narcissus' arm; for neither were "archers." "I have always made it a question of doubt in my own mind, whether Cleopatra would have met many a Mark Antony in England. We seldom admire Ethiops!"

"Miss Adair means," interrupted Elton, dropping in amongst them, "that she questions whether any one else would have hung that Queen of Night Cleopatra, in other gems, after it pleased her, like a greedy hussy, to melt down her pearls, and

'Drink the treasure in a single draught.'"

A lawn of archers is like a crowd in a street; one stops, all stop. Thus a little group was collected, and the bows and arrows, except mental ones, at a standstill. When Elton spoke the last words, some one asked (one of those matter-of-fact persons who require chapter and verse for all—we think it was Narcissus), "From whom do you quote?"

"'Pon my life, I don't know," answered Elton. "I never remember my authors; and, by the way, I think it a most ungenerous tax on our memories, a man put-

ting his name to the nonsense he writes—it makes one look a fool not to recollect him. If I were an author, I'd shut myself up in a box, with air-holes in the top, like a boa-constrictor; no one should ever see me, and I would be fed with a quill through one of these! But, to satisfy the exacting, I think I am quoting from Goldsmith's *Animated* Nature! Cleopatra was so particularly lively!"

"Mr. Elton delights in apparent ignorance, and *bêtise*," sneered the amiable Angelina; "but here is one, I make no doubt, who can tell you any thing which may be collected from *books*," and she looked towards Lady Montgomery.

"Why not yourself?" hastily asked Elton, to avert the fresh impertinence he saw looming over Kate's head; "your mother paid enough for your schooling, as folks say, and, with Miss Caffir for a female mentor, how be other than a walking library! But I forget; the pupil was possibly less apt than the mistress, for the latter certainly has outstripped her *now*."

With all his policy, Elton could not forbear this little revenge for all her bitterness to others. Angelina felt it, and the white lip grew livid.

"Were you appealing to me?" inquired Lady Montgomery, who had seen the look.

"Yes," quickly answered Elton, forestalling what Angelina might ask, and the manner of so doing. "Can you tell us the author of those lines?" He repeated them. She paused a moment, and replied—

"T. K. Hervey says:—

" The Eastern queen who melted down her pearl,
And drank the treasure in a single draught,
Was wiser far than hearts that love too well!"

Unconsciously she commenced the quotation; but, as the last words fell from her lips, the tone accentuated them, and the heart echoed them in a sigh. Involuntarily Adair pressed her arm, it was done without actual motive or reflection, beyond kindness for any one sad enough to sigh; but by mere trifles, empires may be overthrown. She coloured, something of an old feeling of passion shot through his heart, which trembled, as he hastily drew her aside, saying, "Another wager on the bull's eye, Lady Montgomery.—Kate, Kate," he continued, when they were out of hearing, "why will you be so stupid, so—I was going to say—unkind, in ever recurring to the past, best unremembered by both of us?"

This was not prudent on his part; it would have been better to have passed over the sigh and tone in silence, "Unkind!" she asked, looking up in his face with open eyes, "unkind to you? You do not feel what I struggle to conceal; you are a friend, a brother—you lose no opportunity of telling me so, lest I should forget it."

"I must *only* be such, Kate, you know that."

"Then I, Richard," she cried impetuously, "have less duplicity, more candour, or deeper affections than you; for I own I *never* shall forget the love I bore you, never obliterate it, neither seek *now* to do so."

"For mercy's sake, Kate, be calm!" he whispered, alarmed at her energy, lest she should be overheard; "what can urge you to speak and feel thus? If you

really loved me, you would spare me the pain these memories must give me, vain and useless to-day."

"I know that," she answered in a more subdued tone; "but had you ever really loved me, I should not have been Sir Philip's wife. But by your coldness and indifference towards me, and love for another—ay, love for another, start as you will at my words—and trifling, Richard, towards myself, you have made me what I am!"

"Are you not happy, Kate?" and an almost sigh choked the words. He felt her reproach of himself was merited; for he had too lightly led her to believe he passionately loved her, at a moment when another held him in bondage.

"Happy!" she replied bitterly; "happy! when there comes one between me and even calm, and peace—love, I do not speak of now; legitimate love is impossible. I hoped for contentment at all events with Sir Philip in doing my duty, however painful to him, and succouring my poor father; and what is my fate? The latter is every where made a source of sarcastic reproach to Lady Montgomery, and by acting on the pride of my husband, makes him hate, where he might else have tolerated."

A bitter curse—one we will not record—burst from his lips against Angelina.

"Ay, curse her—curse another too—if you CAN; for she is the mainspring of all this sorrow, and yet, with all, I could find in my heart to pity her, were she not a cold, heartless coquette."

"To whom do you allude?" he asked, but it was to cover the feelings he did not wish her to see.

"Richard, Richard," was her almost agonized prayer, "be true to yourself—your own good, open nature, and not so false to me! You know well to whom I allude, the one who has ravished all from me; Philip loved—loves her still; and you, dearer than all, you love her—Mariam Lincoln!"

He was silent a moment, and then a nobler thought than any selfish temptation could have been, in alluring this galled heart to find rest on his bosom, made him say in low measured tones:—

"Kate! dear Kate! if it may save you from cherishing a vain hope, from indulging a deep but dangerous dream, I will own to you, that—well, after that day, so nearly fatal to us, at Highgate, when you fled, I gave myself up to the consolation of another's presence, and I almost grew to love Mariam." He could not hurt her by uttering the more unveiled truth, that he had—even at the time he wooed Kate—loved her rival.

"And she, Richard?" asked the breathless, agitated woman—

"Scorns and despises me!"

"What a wilful thing the human heart is!" uttered she, in a tone of deep meditation. The looming cares of this life, made even a (generally speaking) thoughtless being like Kate, grow fearful of those mysterious, hidden influences around her which she felt, and was forced to acknowledge the force of; "for here is a girl holding

so many destinies in her hand, and she plays with them as a child with mere painted toys—defacing and breaking all around at her will. Sir Philip she rejected; and if woman's manner may be taken as index of her heart, she loves him, and by showing that affection now, estranges from me the regard which would have bred contentment in my career! You love her, and for that love have slighted mine, which would have reckoned any thing joy, so it won your heart; and all this is the work of a cold, heartless, selfish girl!" There was a pause, he could not reply.

"Speak to me, Richard!" she exclaimed—at last raising her voice, "your silence drives me mad! I am so truly wretched!" and the long suppressed tears burst forth in torrents, as she flung on the grass the bow and arrows she had held, up to that moment, in her hand.

"For Heaven's sake, for mine, your own, be calm!" he cried, hastily leading her from the green to an alley beyond—"You do not know the ruin all this will entail upon you. Sir Philip will notice your agitation, your estrangement—Kate, Kate, pity me; for you little know how bitterly I reproach myself for all!"

* * * * * *

"Richard and Lady Montgomery seem tired of archery, and prefer autumnal flowers and quiet alleys," said Angelina to Sir Philip, looking after the two, who stood near a cluster of dahlias; but their thoughts were far from any thing so fair, though as scentless, for the sweet

odour of peace was fast flying both, even in outward seeming—Kate was becoming reckless of all.

Sir Philip made no reply; Mariam's absence wore his not too patient temper. Poor madman! he had, like many another lunatic called by the world a sane man, never asked himself, "Where it could end, or avail his happiness, if Mariam loved him." Even with this feeling in his heart he felt jealous, not of his wife's love, but his own honour; and he bit his impatient lip into silence, lest he should degrade his anger and determination towards her, by giving it utterance to those around, who, his good sense told him, would laugh at his wrongs in whatever shape they might appear. He laughed, somewhat discordantly, 'tis true, and, calling to the others, approached the lawn and target, and, taking up Kate's bow, commenced trying his skill with a steady hand, which deceived even Angelina, who watched him narrowly.

Mariam again—there she stood at her window, watching still. Let us look on this scene as one of real life, of every-day occurrence, and let the too susceptible heart—one of the saddest gifts awarded humanity—take courage; and, until it is endowed with the power of reading others' hearts, not permit its own a hasty and too often erroneous judgment of the feelings and thoughts engendered against it.

The passing scenes will sufficiently convey our meaning. Could Mariam have heard what passed, the now [illegible] would have been lit up with the joy

which the once lonely heart feels, when well and confidently assured of sympathy and friendship—things more stable even than love—but this, too, was hers.

She watched—and Richard's energy, Kate's emotion, even her tears, were not hidden from her. The merely human heart rejoiced for a moment, but one of revenge over their grief, and then the gentler, immortal loveliness came down like an aureole to adorn her spirit. A tear fell for a sister's danger and a brother's temptation, and a soft low prayer rose to heaven, as a star to hang in its planet-lit vault, beseeching that aid for them which Heaven alone might give; and twilight evening came. The lawn was deserted, the busy world within their lighted rooms, and still Mariam—poor India's child of mystic spells, not foreign to her mind—stood almost superstitiously watching as the stars came forth, and each seemed to her a spirit's prayer, and she wondered if her prayer for them was registered among those glittering above her, it had been so heartfelt.

Alas! an answer came to her excited fancy. A star shot from heaven; lost to view. And she sighed deeply as if her supplication had been cast down unheard, ungranted.

"Missy, im time to dress," whispered Leah, creeping gently towards her, and touching her arm. Mariam started.

"You there, Leah?" she asked hastily.

"Missy not angry wid poor Leah," cried the girl, kneeling and kissing her hand; it was the slavery of affection, not the servility of slavery. "But im be

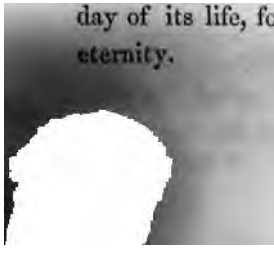
berry sorrowful now; missy nebber speak, nebber say kind word! Oh! im wish im dead afore im grieve so much! Leah berry wicked!"

The dark eyes dropped tears, which streamed over the dusky cheek, as pure and holy of sincerity and truth, as if the clear blue eye of England had shed them, and the rosy cheek paled beneath their gush.

And yet there are those who shrink in almost terror, certainly repulsion, from even the Indian, who has not the unhappy African's stain of slavery imprinted on him.

But Mariam would not have been one of these; even had she been a lily of our northern climate, she would have then done what now she did—raised the woman from her knees, and comforted her with words far dearer to poor Leah, in that she felt how little her mistress could afford to give, herself a beggar for, sympathy.

But there is an inexhaustible source of comfort within our own breast, sent down like rain from heaven; and the more we give to others, the richer, fuller rises the well-spring within our breasts, ever flowing, never dried up. And as the gentle stream murmurs on, in the sun of an approving conscience, pretty wild-flowers come forth from the long grass on its banks, lending smiles and perfume through the long summer day of its life, for it flows a living stream onward to eternity.



taking a chair opposite to her, but without approaching the fire in a comfortable sort of way, as when two are going to indulge a cozy chat. No, he sate cold and apart, one arm on the table, looking at her. She half turned round, with a saucy, but quiet ease of manner, as if to say, "Now, let us begin, and who the winner?"

"I wish to lay a case before you, for your quiet judgment," he said at last.

"I have to thank you for esteeming my judgment of sufficient weight to do so," was her answer.

"A lady, a foolish, sentimental, idiot of a woman, old enough to have known better——"

"I don't think wisdom always increases with age, it grows very owlish and stupid sometimes; that is probably why that bird is chosen to represent it," she placidly interrupted.

"Allow me to continue without your very witty observations until the end."

"I beg your pardon, I thought you were going to amuse me with some *piquante* anecdote; seeing my mistake, I will listen in tranquil stolidity of intellect to your tale of some old woman, who, I presume, 'lived in her shoe.'"

"Your insolence, Lady Montgomery, will not divert me from a duty, however painful," burst from him at last.

She merely shrugged her shoulders, and he continued. "A lady, some few years since, was silly enough, from some absurd idea of feminizing her son's too robust mind, to throw him into the society of his tutors'

daughter; in fact, they were domiciled for a length of time together. The lady was sufficiently——I really can scarcely find a term to qualify her blindness——"

"Call it arrant folly," she interrupted.

"Well, then (I see you can assist me), call it so; she was mad, foolish enough to suppose, that a merely brotherly, sisterly affection, would be the result."

"Mad, indeed!" uttered this reckless woman.

He continued, affecting not to hear, but his colour changed. "Time flew onwards, and this girl was thrown into the society of an honourable man, who—pitying her state, bereft of a mother's care, with a sick, helpless father, and, it must be admitted, not all unselfish, for he had a feeling nearly akin to love for her, one she might have ripened to that—married her."

Kate, with perfect composure, stooped and secured the lace of her *brodequin*.

"Instead," he continued, raising his tone, in deep indignation at her coolness, "of any feeling of gratitude on her part, no sooner his wife than she commenced a series of acts, a combination of heartlessness, and want of all respect for herself, or her injured husband, in every way compromising herself with the companion of her girlhood."

"How atrociously ill you tell a story, my dear Sir Philip!" she said, impatiently. "You make one quite nervous, with your 'A lady,' 'The tutor's daughter,' 'The son.' Pray, dot your *i*'s and cross your *t*'s! Give us names; or, shall I fill up the blanks? What do

you say, for example, to 'Mrs. Adair,' 'Richard,' 'Kate Bateman,' and the *injured* husband—why, 'Sir Philip Montgomery?'" and she laughed sarcastically.

"By heavens, madam, your cool daring makes me question your sanity. But as *you* have chosen the names, under their banners we will discuss the point. And I, Sir Philip, tell Kate Bateman, that——"

"Stop, Sir Philip!" she cried, rising with dignity, and leaning one arm on the mantelpiece—"I am Lady Montgomery now, whatever I was; and—if *you* forget my title—permit me to tell you, you have little right to complain if I, ceasing to remember it, for one happy hour dream I am Kate Bateman." He strove to speak, but she waved her hand almost imperiously, and continued—"You are not perfectly correct in your version of this tale. Sir Philip found, sought, pursued Kate Bateman, into the humble home her exertions had created for a sick father; he drew her into public, wooed her with professions of affection, which she felt from gratitude she should learn to return tenfold—*for she believed him.* Well, then, they married, and all her powers were exerted to make him a return for the affection which she deemed had selected her, from all others, to share his title and fortune. All was seemingly bright around her. When she looked upon her father's improved state, she blessed the author; when her husband was absent, she watched his return, to meet him with the happy thoughts her heart had gathered, from memories of his kindness." Her voice

grew low and trembling as she uttered these words. Recovering herself, she hastily added, fixing her gaze in stern coldness on the motionless listener—

"Now, let us see the reverse of this picture:—Scarcely have they re-entered society together, when she hears the whispered, or loud buzz around her of 'Sir Philip married her from *pique*, because Mariam Lincoln rejected him with scorn;' and, in proof of the sincerity of the world's words this once, his wife is slighted for Miss Lincoln, spoken coldly or harshly to; does she wear a colour or dress to please him, she is counselled to model herself after a heartless, unprincipled flirt, who refused the man's honourable offers to receive the homage of his dishonourable overtures! Now, Sir Philip, you read the true version, may it please and benefit you!"

"Benefit me, madam! in what?"

"By showing you what you have lost, and——"

"What I may lose?"

"The future I presume not to read."

"I am not surprised at the attack you have made on a virtuous, amiable girl: too often we seek to abase others to our own level!"

"Have a care, Sir Philip," she scornfully said, "or your words may make me, out of the pure love of truth, *not* stamp you liar!"

He sprang up—"Do you dare," he said with violence, "deny your affection for Adair?"

"Not more than you, your love for Miss Lincoln,—with this difference, however: Mine is the affection

which has grown with me, ivy round my heart, to quote an old simile, and that heart—oak; strong to cherish and sustain it, lest it should trail, perchance in the dust, at the feet of a——Miss Lincoln! Bad example is contagious; we should employ antidotes against poisons!"

"And for this *exalted*, romantic idea, my name is to be made a mark of scorn?"

"Hush! hush! Sir Philip," she proudly cried, "your name will gain lustre by being attached to a cause more worthy, than deceiving one woman in marriage, and now openly endeavouring to seduce another."

"I forbid your familiarity with Mr. Adair, and I command you to cease calling him 'Richard;' these are low vulgar habits I insist upon Lady Montgomery's correcting; with these to stamp her, it is not wonderful I hear ever buzzing in my ears, the reproach of having married a mere tutor's daughter!"

"And pray Heaven you may never hear a bitterer reproach for having married her!" cried the exasperated, galled woman, bitter contempt in her look and tone; "pray you may never yourself drive her to fling a slur on your name, which your generous action would have ennobled, in marrying a poor girl, had you treated her kindly. I grieve that the malignant envy of others, in reproaching me with my father's honest labour, has made you so narrow in mind. Pity it is that my father had not been *your* tutor; he would have, perhaps, instilled into your heart some of those nobler precepts of

uprightness, the want of which, now force his child to despise you!"

Without glancing again at him, she quitted the room with a quiet composure, which left Sir Philip in any thing but a state of perfect peace with his conscience.

It is very unsafe to go into court without, what lawyers term, "clean hands."

CHAPTER VII.

Sir Philip felt, as he took his accustomed seat near Mariam at table, that certainly his hands were, in a figurative sense, rather soiled; he had permitted temper to carry him beyond the bounds of reason and common-sense, or else he would have reviewed his own conduct before attacking that of his wife.

It was with a kind of bravado that he sought a place near Mariam, who with pleasure saw him approach, as his doing so prevented the attentions of others most unpleasing to her. Kate, from a feeling of deep indignant revenge against her husband, without hesitation sought Adair for her neighbour at table, and thus two, much interested in this game, were playing blindfolded into the hands of others. We may imagine in how excited a mood Sir Philip found himself; angry with himself and every one. Mariam, for the first time, was rather startled by one or two observations of his, most unusual from a man who had hitherto scarcely alluded to the past. But he felt the necessity of revenging himself on some one, or in some way, and he thought, could she really be brought to even encourage his attentions by the slightest approach to acquiescence in them, he then might calculate on future plans; but her quiet

acceptance of his society, her evident satisfaction in it, the motive of which, unseen by him, was not particularly flattering, led him into so many vain conjectures that he felt completely lost.

Mariam's solitary meditations, then her peace-making with Leah, had so much softened her heart, that a more than usually gentle manner led Sir Philip into a career of hope, down which he galloped in gallant style, nor dreamed of such things as hedges or hurdles to arrest him. A thought—not quite worthy of any honourable man—had taken sudden possession of his soul, from the result of his conversation with his wife; this was, if he saw any possible hope of Mariam consenting to become his wife, in every way to favour Kate's attachment for Adair, that the probable result might release himself. With this wild and incoherent idea in his mind, he became easy and entertaining to an extraordinary degree; not only was he a pleasing companion to all, but especially attentive to Mariam, who, won by the mirth around her, threw off much of her usual gloom, and surprised more than one present by her liveliness. Let her not be looked upon as a morose, habitually unhappy girl. She had been far different once; but though so young, the many crushing events of the past year of her life had acted painfully on her nature, making her feel lonely and despised in every crowd of joyous faces.

Dinner was over, and Kate's once happy countenance was overcast; she felt a sadness creeping over her, in proportion as her supposed rival seemed gayer. Her

first impulse, on coming down-stairs from her dressing-room, had been to brave Sir Philip by her open flirtation with Adair; but a better thought came over her—one of self-imposed suffering, it is true, but her conscience approved it; so she, so little used to control herself, became strong to bear. There is not a more vigorous virtue in the human heart than gratitude, and, despite all his change, all her own deception, the memory of acts of kindness to herself, and her father, stole over her, and made the stubborn heart bend to bear, even if it broke. With this good intent she watched her opportunity during the evening, to seek Adair, where they might not be overheard.

"I see you avoid me alone, dear Richard," she said sadly, "but do not fear for any future outburst on my part. I was led to it, maddened to it to-day, by the future before me; for I can no longer blind myself to the fact that Sir Philip loves, and, as far as her nature will permit it, is loved by, Miss Lincoln."

"Kate, you are wrong, doubly so; for why should she have refused him if any affection existed in her heart? More than this I cannot tell you as to how I gained my information; but of the fact I assure you, and by her own lips—she loves another."

"And you—you Richard," cried the agitated woman, "know that other? It is yourself—is it not?"

"No, distinctly; positively, no."

"Oh! then," and her sad face brightened, "I can go in more peace. I will ask Philip to take me hence, and I will endeavour again, for all our sakes, to gain his affec-

tion, and perform my duty, however sad it may be. Forgive me, dear Richard, all my impetuosity to-day; but I never had a hand to guide me, and my own affections were all thrown on—why hesitate to own it?—you. I have been unfortunate in ever meeting Philip; for else, perhaps,——" she paused, and a blush of doubt crossed over her face. This woman so imperious to her husband, stung by his insults, was all humility to Adair.

"Perhaps what, dear Kate?" he asked gently.

"Oh! no, never mind, it was a vain thought; for though *now*, as his wife, I am sought and admitted every where, *then* I should still only have been the poor tutor's daughter."

"By all my best hopes in heaven, Kate, *that* would never have stood between us. Any man might be proud of your love—I am," he spoke energetically, for he really loved her much, and it was, unfortunately, a daily increasing affection. He was not quite free from a mental reservation in what he uttered; he would not wound her now by again insinuating that another might have proved a bar to their union.

"Do not speak thus to me, Richard," she whispered, her heart bursting with the war within her; "for you make my duty the harder of accomplishment; I will—must go, or who may save me near you? I know my own weakness, I felt it once, and now I am less able to fight against your affection, he being so estranged."

"Kate, you are wrong in one supposition: Mariam Lincoln does not love your husband, but whom she loves I know not."

"And you do not love her, Richard? are you quite certain?"

"Pshaw! what a silly, jealous girl you are! Certainly, not."

"Then I am satisfied, I know you would not deceive me even in that—you never did in any thing—God help me! I sorely did myself."

Her perfect confidence in him made his conscience give a painful twinge, but he silenced it with the argument that it would be impossible to tell her the truth; yet truth would have saved him many an after pang. Men are self-confident creatures; she, poor girl, would have fled the danger; this was the good seed upspringing on a rock, but the warm sun was high above to scorch and uproot it. Adair urged her not to fly. Why do so? Was not their affection sanctified within brotherly, sisterly bounds? Why sever their ties of friendship? He should be lost without her; he had no fear of their erring, he was strong in his good and firm resolutions; only place her reliance upon him, and all would be pure and dear, as when they sate beneath the large outspreading oak on the lawn under the window, where she listened to this fond appeal. He had found the right chord, and in recalling those pure happy days of almost childhood, he woke so sweet a tone in her heart, how could a dream of guilt bring its discord to unstring it? She promised to remain, never to lose sight of him, as far as her own powers might control her acts; and, as Adair pressed the hand he held

in both of his, he assuredly loved her with a love which made the title "husband," jar on his ear.

But a better fate was at work for her yet than the one urging them onward.

Sir Philip had found means to lead Mariam apart from the others, who were all engaged in amusements consonant to the tempers of each.

"Do you know, Miss Lincoln," he said, "that I have many enemies?"

"You, Sir Philip?" she cried, in perfect innocence of his meaning; "how so?"

"I mean the many who envy me the privilege of sometimes being at your side; more so, I may say without vanity, however proud it may make me, than the rest of mankind here."

"The pleasure will not overwhelm you," she replied, with perfect simplicity of heart, "if it balance with the toil of being my cavalier sometimes; for I am naturally indolent, hating trouble myself, and, from the principle of doing as you would be done by, giving little."

"But even that little I am envied."

"By whom?" she hastily asked, a hope in her voice, echoed from the heart.

"Oh! yonder—and yonder—and yonder," he answered, directing a glance from each of the speakers on the lawn, to Narcissus Browne; and there the glance paused.

"Pshaw!" she uttered coldly; "such butterflies, if they had nothing else to envy, would indulge that feeling towards the dormant crysalis—nothing but a

grub—not yet gay and gaudy. Envy is a part of their nature."

"I do not know you this evening; you are sarcastic. I like your own natural goodness better, Miss Lincoln."

"Am I? Heaven help me! I am a poor original, and ever borrowing from those around me. 'Tis the very atmosphere here."

"You are quite right; that is the reason why I regret to see you imbrued with its chilling rain."

"Say sleet, for it chills one's very blood. Rain comes welcome and soft in the sweet April day; sleet is the wintry north wind's tears; sarcasm, ice on the heart."

"All true; but we will have none of it. Now, tell me why do you permit me a privilege I see unwillingly granted to others, and free men?"

She was on the point of uttering her thought, and saying, "Because you are *not* free, and consequently I am, from annoyance and importunity;" but as the words were on her lip, she felt there might seem rudeness in giving them utterance, so she paused hastily, and coloured deeply. His eyes rested on her downcast ones, and an anxious, searching look, sought to read her meaning, which the quivering lashes concealed.

"You do not answer," he said at last, in a deep, tender tone, one long a stranger to her ear, he had been ever so guarded. His manner startled her, for her freedom from suspicion of wrong in his attentions had something in it of the Hindoo widow's, who casts herself on her husband's funeral pile, not seeing the possibility

of the heart once wedded, ever owning another tie; this had been her self-imagined security with him.

She thought he loved Kate, as a man should, his wife at all times, but especially the bride of a few months. So strangely alarmed had she become, that her words clung to her lips, and gave no sound.

"Where is your ring,—*the* ring—mine one happy night?" he asked, at last resolved to startle her into some tangible emotion, to which he might attach his further advances.

"Sir Philip!" she cried, looking up, and every gleam of colour departed, the eyes too seemed strained by the strong efforts to read him in his new character.

"That little ring, Mariam, which made you mine, me, what I have never been since—a hopeful, happy man. I am now a very wretched one; married where I cannot love, where I am detested; loving where I must never hope—must I, Mariam?"

"For pity's sake, Sir Philip, what do you, can you mean?" she exclaimed, in almost wildness of manner.

"Mean? all I say, Mariam. I have never loved but you, never shall. I married in *pique*, I scarcely know why; and my wife knows all—knows I loved, and love you—Mariam. Give me that little ring, and say—but no, say nothing; let me take it once again, and, should I ever be free, *I will restore it with a companion.*"

"Merciful Heaven!" she whispered, drawing her shuddering hands from his grasp, and pressing down her eyelids with them. "Has one uncalculated step

led me to so much pain, such heavy retribution? Not me alone, but others!"

"The ring, dear Mariam—hush!" he cried again, endeavouring to seize her hand. "You will be overheard—give me the ring! On my soul, I will ask no word, no pledge—make your own terms: the ring now, no longer given in haste, will assure me of your sincerity, and I will await the time of our union with patience, assured that the fate which has made you love me now, will reward our constancy at last."

Mariam, with many faults, had strong, unshaken principles of right and religion. Her every better feeling turned against this man, and herself too, for having been the cause, as she feared, of twofold misery to another, his unfortunate wife; first, in driving him in *pique* to marry her, and now to hate, for the sake of those false hopes her very innocence of wrong had given birth to. "Sir Philip," she said at last, in tones so slow and measured that she amazed herself, and left no place for hope in his breast, "you ask me for much which I do not possess; in the first place, that ill-fated ring. On that day when you restored it, I lost it. Unless you possess it, I am ignorant where it can be. I never asked you for it, because I did not wish to recur to a painful subject—but this believe, were both free, and that day to come to-morrow, there would be nothing changed between us!"

"Nothing? Surely I have not been again deceiving myself?"

"I am wrong in saying nothing," she continued, in

the same cold tone, "there would be much changed between us. Then, in rejecting, I respected you; now, I despise the man who could be unprincipled enough to woo a girl for his second wife, and his first a young, hopeful, confiding bride." She attempted to rise—.

"No, not thus," he cried, grasping her hands; "one word more before you despise me. Review your own conducts ince we met after my marriage. Have you not from the first found evident pleasure in my attentions?"

"I have, Sir Philip; pray, loose my hands. I will hear you to the end, *for the last time;* but it was because I felt gratéful for your forgiveness of my much self-accused fault—and then, pardon my ignorance of English customs, but we, Indian girls, are taught the sacredness of married ties; we do not know those laws which seem to rule you. But I am wrong; I will not believe *any* virtuous girl would listen more calmly than I have done to a Sir Philip Montgomery."

Before he could detain her, she had sprung up, and was gone, but not far, alone; Elton who, unseen, had been watching all, quietly grasped her hand, and, before her dazzled sight could well recognise him, drew her towards an unoccupied ottoman, and seated himself beside her.

"Where were you going in that excited state, Mariam?" he asked; "going to commit suicide? or, only homicide? and who was the victim to have been?"

"Pray, don't laugh, Mr. Elton; I am much agitated, deeply pained."

"So I perceive—but not by Narcissus Browne this time; for there he is, quietly talking to Mrs .Adair, though I will not swear that you are not the subject of his discourse, and the text, 'Matrimony is a holy estate;' and on his part, I believe, to do him only justice, without any reference to your personal estate——"

Mariam did not even smile.

"Don't look so grave, though I am serious in what I am about to say. Why not give Narcissus a patient hearing? Never mind his queer name. Obliterate from your memory the youth falling in love with his own shadow in the stream. Depend upon it, this Narcissus will only fall in love with you. I declare, unless you do, he will turn into one of those bilious-looking flowers to which the original youth gave their name, for he is quite yellow with jealousy. What was Sir Philip saying to you?" he thus adroitly brought out a leading question.

"Pray, do not ask me?"

"Oh! but I wish particularly to know; won't you confide in me?"

"I cannot, Mr. Elton; and when I say this, believe it arises from no disinclination to confide in you, but from the impossibility, with delicacy, of doing so."

"Do not colour so deeply when speaking of it; people will fancy that I am making love to you." He paused, glancing at her with a peculiarly strange and inquiring expression. She made no reply.

"Bachelors have some timidity left; myself for instance," he said, still keenly examining her countenance;

"but married men, none! And then they are so frightfully monotonous, all singing the same lullaby to hush their woes to rest! Robust, jovial men, endeavouring to persuade poor weak women that they have only to creep into some nook and die, because they married in 1851, instead of waiting till 1852 brought them acquainted with yourself!" Mariam was evidently too much pained to enter into any discussion.

"Let us talk of Narcissus," he said at last. "Why not try and like him, Mariam? You know, do you not, that I have your interest at heart?"

"I firmly believe so, Mr. Elton."

"Then I will tell you, and I am now serious. Mrs. Adair is resolved you shall marry soon. She is your guardian. What can you do? There are those who will urge her acceptance for you of Narcissus's suit; disappointed themselves, they will revenge that feeling on you. Why not make a virtue of a necessity, and accept him?"

"Because I never should be happy with him."

"You are resolved?"

"Firmly—sincerely."

"I am glad to hear it. I only asked to prove you. Now, I will point out what you should do for your own happiness, and the salvation of another."

"What other can I have any interest sufficient, to lose or save?"

"One you love—Richard Adair—Mariam. You love one another as truly as ever two loved; false pride and susceptibility keep you apart. If Richard come to you

in kindness, evincing a desire to be again friendly, as you once were, will you give him a patient hearing and trial?"

"Mr. Elton, you are wrong in your impression about Richard; he loved Lady Montgomery, and, unfortunately for both, does so still," she energetically cried.

"Not as he does you, but you have only answered for him: yourself?"

"I do not love him," was the proud reply.

"Well, then, there will be the greater merit in marrying and saving him. Do you know on what precipice he stands? Sir Philip proposed once to you, and still loves, hating the wife he married in *pique*. Your recent blindness towards him, in the innocence of your views about marriage ties, has led him into a scheme as wild as criminal; neither more nor less, than throwing his wife in Richard's way, and, should they fall into the pitfall prepared for them, procure a divorce and marry you! Something of this, though not in all its iniquity, he has just unveiled to you."

"Merciful goodness!" exclaimed the girl, her pure mind horror-stricken, and yet convinced he spoke with good cause; "have you dreamed this iniquity, or did you listen to us, and conjecture?"

"Ah, you see, I guessed right! then something *did* pass between you, of the sort?"

"It did, but not a hint of how his freedom might be acquired."

"Well, now you know it, I ask you in charity, if not in affection, save Richard."

"I cannot, Mr. Elton," she answered, in agony. "How marry him, even if he would, when he loves her, and feels a disgust to—"

"The little black girl! Ever the same too susceptible, erroneous idea. Do you imagine I would urge you, with the great affection I bear you, to unhappiness, even for his sake?"

"Convince me," she uttered at last, in a low tone, "that I am not an object repulsive to him, and if he ask me, I will marry him, at whatever cost to my own feelings, which have hoped for more in marriage than toleration."

"Thank you, Mariam, now you are indeed a dear good girl; depend upon me, *your* dignity shall be in all things respected."

CHAPTER VIII.

But, as has been said, a better fate was at work, one in kindly intent, to outwit the sin and sorrow watching for their victims. Sir Philip, foiled in his purpose to win Mariam to an acknowledgment of the love he still (prompted by his vanity) thought her nurturing for himself, resolved, by absenting himself now, at some future time to bring her to acknowledge the affection, he, despite himself, honoured her for not too hastily avowing. Sir Philip was not a villain, but a man of this world; only this was his doctrine, as long as a person dealt honourably with his neighbour in mere every-day business, so long as he never openly violated his word, all else was fair, especially in love; and somehow, he had reasoned himself into the idea that Kate had both deceived and ill-treated him, in marrying him; he believing, at the time he contracted that marriage, that it would in some way, not clear even to his own mind, draw Mariam to himself. 'Tis thus we too often allow an idea to engross our minds, and when we discover all has been there engendered by mistake, we never blame ourselves for the failure of our desire, but revenge its non-success on another.

This feeling it was which made Sir Philip next day,

to Kate's amazement and annoyance, inform her of his intention to quit the Grange. She had made up her mind to remain in quiet, relying firmly on two broken reeds, her own resolution against temptation, and Adair's assurance that nothing should induce him to harbour a thought of her more than a brother might of a sister. It is all very well promising no harbour to such thoughts; but, somehow, they watch until the harbour-master is off his guard, and then, like piratical crafts as they are, slip quietly into port, and blow up all around them.

Kate had felt a kind of proud pleasure in the idea of proving herself in the furnace of temptation; it therefore little pleased her to be forced away by the peremptory commands of her husband. Only one person felt unqualified delight at their departure—this was Mariam; for the presence of both was equally painful to her. When Sir Philip pleased, his word was law to all about him, even Kate had to bend to it; she, moreover, was too proud to plead, and, with scarcely time permitted her to bid adieu to any one, she found herself in their travelling carriage, quitting the Grange, to visit Sir Philip's estates in Somersetshire. The journey was more than dull to each; it was beyond measure irksome. She was too candid to affect a good intelligence with him quite foreign to her heart,—he, too much wounded to seek any relief in her conversation, from the wound his vanity had received at Mariam's hands; and thus they journeyed on, each ensconced in opposite corners of the carriage, holding a book, in apparent absorption in its pages, but in reality only as a veil to conceal

the play of the features. Kate departed from the Grange, it became a living tomb to Adair, one in which we are enclosed with all we have loved—now a lifeless, unconscious mould of earth. The very thought that Elton was urging Adair to approach her, and his unmistakeable coldness, made Mariam feel self-abased; for she was playing blindfolded, she imagined, with those who held their cards in the full light of day. She saw nothing, and in deep error feared, that, possibly in mistaken anxiety for her welfare, Elton had betrayed her half-extorted consent to listen to the other, to Adair himself. But such was certainly not the case—Elton knew the heart of man too well, to hope ever to attain a desired end by making the game too cheaply won; he determined to make Adair's wishes give birth to wakeful nights, these to doubts, doubts to hopes, and not till well assured of his sincerity, condense all into crowning certainty. Unfortunately, Adair's mind had too many thoughts occupying it, to give one, a fair and perseveringly wrought basis, on which might be elevated a temple wherein tranquil happiness might take up its abode. Embarrassed in his affairs, he needed that excitement which would obliterate thought and calculation,—he tried to approach Mariam, but there was an awkwardness of manner about her which made any thing like reconciliation impossible; every word of hers seemed constrained to him, and his to her—a sarcasm.

Angelina had so vainly endeavoured to win Narcissus, that now, relinquishing every idea of him, she turned all her thoughts to a species of masked revenge,

by urging her mother to further resolutely his suit with her ward. Angelina did so, much misjudging Mariam; and under the impression that, married to a man she did not love, her Indian temper would make this pleasant world (if we know how to take it) a hell to both. Even her keen sagacity had failed to discover the attachment Mariam bore to Richard, and imagined Sir Philip's rejection by her had been girlish coquetry, most bitterly repented on her part. With these amiable thoughts at heart, she lost no opportunity of urging her mother to enforce, by every means in her power, the girl's consent; and unconsciously Narcissus made her bile the more active, in that he lost no opportunity of confiding his hopes and fears to her, just as he might have done to a male friend. It is bad enough a man not proposing to you, when you give him every hint to do so; but it is like a nightmare of mocking demons, when he treats you with confidential good fellowship as one, for some reason to him most obvious, but to which your own intellect is perseveringly blind, placed without all bounds of inspiring, or feeling love!

The Grange is deserted, winter has passed, and many months gone by, like hedges on a road, which *we* gallop past, though they seem to fly us. The months walk on, not faster or slower; but our minds give the impetus to all, and to the false impression, the *reality*, is a law of the Medes and Persians, altering not.

The season came round once more, Mariam unmarried, disengaged.

Mrs. Adair, merged by private inclination, and An-

gelina's promptings, into a perfect match-maker, quite as much so as if she possessed half a dozen penniless daughters, and by some fairy spell only a certain time to marry them in, as Cinderella had to be a princess. Every *likely* man was welcomed at her house, and Mariam's sight was dazzled day by day with every possible shade of man; and ever the same old song in her ear of, "By the clause in your father's will, you have little time left, in which to choose."

Her sole comforter was Elton, and he was sorely puzzled what to advise; for Adair was seldom even a guest now in his mother's house; and Lady Montgomery——?

After the departure of herself and husband for Dyke Lodge, his Somersetshire estate, to their sullen journey succeeded those *pleasant* little bickerings which a husband and wife, in good society, know so perfectly well how to lay on one another's shoulder, a daily burden to bear; then came a calm and mutual disgust, mutually harboured thoughts of those no longer present. Bateman had been sent for by his child, hoping that his presence might at all events make Sir Philip a little guarded in his unkindness towards her; for a good, kindly heart had risen to the surface, floating above the weeds and mud at the bottom of the current of her life, and once again she resolved to try and win his regard. She cast all thought of Mariam aside, and, looking to the weak side of our nature, in justice she pitied him for his love, and, dropping a tear over her own for Adair, resolved to obliterate it, if possible; and on the principle of giving and

taking, while she strove to make her husband forget, take a draught of Lethe herself.

We will not pretend to say that the resolution of this weak heart did not arise from Adair's absence; full of her sisterly affection, she had hoped his brotherly regard would have sought her shortly after her departure from the Grange. But whether he felt less confidence in the sophistry of all he had resolved, or whether, only *present*, was she an object in his mind, the only certain thing is, that he came not—he wisely kept away; and the husband and wife were thrown upon their own resources for amusement and companionship. To relieve monotony, she sent for her father—monotony to themselves, solitude or dulness to the old man, left alone in town. Bateman came, and almost her first hour of joy for a length of time was when she embraced him, and looked up in the unshaded eyes, which now perfectly saw her.

Sir Philip received him kindly, but there was not the cordiality which a love of a daughter, would have engendered in the son-in-law's mind. Days passed, and still, amidst many thorns, Kate strove to discover and cultivate the good seed of reconciliation with her husband. Many, however, were the bitter hours she passed—hours of heartburning and crushed pride—the honest, wholesome pride of the heart, which, permitted to grow, makes all healthful around; the pride of a self-approving conscience, in having won the love, in unity and fellowship, of a husband and father, inseparable portions of herself. But all her efforts were vain. Sir

Philip was civil, nothing more; and Bateman, despite her efforts at concealing facts, soon discovered, not only that he was an unwelcome guest, but that his child was a despised, neglected wife. One wrong act of Mariam's had given rise to all this evil. Had she at first refused Sir Philip, his mind would have recovered its tone; no man is abased because a woman declines him; the worthiest meet this fate. But her acceptance, rejection, and subsequent kindness of manner, had so morally affected a nervous temperament, that a good man was made unjust, and cruel. These feelings were kept alive in his heart by the continual appearance in newspaper paragraphs of Mariam's name, whose beauty had now become an almost incontestable fact, and the whole battery of innuendoes was levelled about, and brought down to bear upon Mrs. Adair's lovely ward, who was daily changing her positive engagements, if the papers might be credited, in favour of some more fortunate man, than the one of yesterday.

Kate noticed all her husband's irritability, and, mistaking its motive, fancied her father's presence increased it. She was, indeed, placed in a most painful position, the *most so* a woman can be condemned to bear, between duty due to a father and a husband. Slow as Bateman was at perceiving slights and insults, he at last opened his eyes to facts, and a few days' observation convinced him that his presence was disagreeable to Sir Philip; this was the more forcibly painful, in comparison with the kindness and thoughtfulness which had made him a home with Kate some few months be-

fore. He said nothing for days; but he watched both his child and her husband, and the result was, a perfect comprehension of Sir Philip's estrangement from her, though the cause was a mystery. Kate, who was unconscious of the discovery her poor father had made, and who was exerting all her powers to keep him in mental darkness, was painfully awakened from her dream of security one day, by the irresistible action of grief on his heart, which made him rise suddenly from his chair, and fling his arms around her bent neck, as he burst into tears.

Tears of infancy, tears of age—the extremes—one half laughter, the other despair!

She had been looking pensively down on her clasped hands, her work resting on her knee, deeming her father too much engrossed in his book to notice her thoughtfulness. When she felt his arms around her, his tears on her neck, and the arms, so enfeebled by his long confinement, tremble as they clasped her, she started up in terror.

"Father, dearest father, what is the matter?" she cried, struggling from him, and grasping his falling arm in both her hands.

"My child—my poor Kate!" sobbed the man. "I am very wretched—very, indeed. I have watched you for days. I was doing so a while since, when your hands lay so cold and sad before you, Kate, my child. I have thought much since I was ill. I never pondered on many things before so much; and, as I looked at you just now, I thought how much sad eloquence

there is in clasped hands resting on the knee, on which a young rigid face looks down."

Those now encasing his, trembled with the strong effort she was making not to weep.—"Father," she said, looking up with the caricature of a smile, for the mouth grimaced it, whilst the rest of the face was twitching nervously to repress her emotion, "you have been reading some sentimental book, and have grown quite poetical."

"The poetry of pain, my child," he uttered in low accents, as the tears coursed down his cheeks; "for it emanates from the full soul. You are unhappy, Kate; tell me why." As he spoke, he dropped on the chair from which she had just risen, and drew her on his knee.

CHAPTER IX.

THERE was a time, in the commencement of her married career, that such an act of affection on her father's part would have been balm to Kate's heart, which had so often vainly essayed every means of winning him to some shew of sympathy with herself—to draw him from the contemplation of his own sufferings. Now, it only harassed her, obliging her to a confidental tone, which for his sake, she felt indisposed to indulge in; for, in doing so, of necessity she should be obliged to admit her husband's estrangement; and how confess that, without wounding her poor parent, whom she loved so well, and making him feel his dependence. She knew her father was proud; education will thus make the most lowly, for it enlarges the mind, making it fully comprehend the littleness of others measured by its own.

Kate sate constrainedly, and like a guilty thing, on his knee, fearing every moment that her husband would enter. What more dreadful than the fear of jealousy between a husband and father? not the permitted jealousy of love, which makes us envious of the legitimate affection of even a parent, lest it should surpass what we ourselves possess, but that of a man conscious that a wife might in justice complain of his estrange-

ment and unkindness. All this it was which made her sit uneasily on his knee, and, as his arms wound round her, hers endeavoured to repulse him, and this the agitated man felt.

"Kate! Kate!" he sobbed at last, "has it come to this with you, too?—repulsed by all, scorned by all, a beggar living on charity—"

He said no more audibly; she turned, and those once sightless eyes were streaming with unrepressed tears—husband, selfish fears, all were forgotten, and her arms clasped his neck as she pillowed his throbbing temples on her heaving bosom. What so holy as a daughter's love? Had Bateman in early life clung more to his child's affection, and taught her that he on earth was but foresent to give her a glimpse and faint idea of an eternal Father's love, this now weak child would have grown strong in herself to bear all her trials, knowing. the rock against which she leant could never be shaken. But Bateman had enwrapped himself in books and their love, despising and neglecting the beautiful pages of a daughter's heart, and now it was almost to her a dead language, foreign to ear and lips. She could scarcely understand him, still less hope to be understood; but yet his last agonizing words and tone smote every chord in her woman's heart, and as she wept with him, she prayed Heaven to enlighten her ignorance, and teach her how to love him with entire love; and far more, how to make him comprehend hers, teaching her to comfort him with it, as a daughter should.

But there is a voice of sympathy in every emotion

which flows from a mutual source; and, while he wept for her grief, she mourned over his affliction and crushed pride, and in that close and loving embrace, they knew and loved one another better than in all the past years of her still short life.

Kate, we have said, forgot Sir Philip; but the watchful spirit of evil, ever around us, had not done so, and, guided by him, the husband entered the room just as she had soothed and consoled her father, by a little pardonable deceit, it is true, into the belief that Sir Philip was all kindness, but of odd temper; delighted with his, Bateman's, presence there, but of so constrained a manner of expressing himself, that the truth often became subject to doubt. But what was not open to doubt was her husband's manner of addressing her. Unheard he had entered, and her last words alone smote on his ear.

"Patience, dear father, all will yet be well; and you and I smiling and happy once again!"

"May I ask, Lady Montgomery," he asked, "in what you and Mr. Bateman are so unhappy beneath this roof, as for you to be necessitated to preach patience to one, by your own showing in need of it?"

Kate forgot her usual dignity in her alarm, and she rose hastily in fear from her father's arms; it was not selfish terror, but a dread of what he might be a witness to. Bateman dropped the arms which no longer clasped her, and sat motionless, the traces of tears visible in the furrows of his face; off the smooth one of youth, they would have been at once effaced by her

embrace, like mist from marble. Sir Philip saw them, and they steeled his heart; for he stood a criminal at a bar of justice—they were his accusers.

"Philip," answered she gently, with an imploring glance towards the other, "my father has scarcely yet recovered his strength of mind or body, and—and—"

"Why do you hesitate?" questioned he in irritation. "Uprightness and candour need no secrets, no double dealings between husband and wife."

"I know that, Philip; neither do I use such weapons as those you speak of towards you, or any, but—"

"The fact is, Sir Philip," said Bateman, rising, and passing a hand over his moistened cheek and eyes with a movement of shame, lest that humid trace should be seen, which action made her heart ache doubly—"I have seen for some time that my child is unhappy. I am a just man, Sir Philip," and he drew up his stooping figure with difficulty; "and proud, too, though a poor tutor; and the first, justice, made me closely watch before speaking to Kate, lest she should be the one in fault. I have judged, and found her blameless."

"Mr. Bateman, can you assume to yourself to know all which may pass in your child's heart to wound or torture me? Some can inflict mortal pain, and no visible puncture be found."

"What can she have ever done?" asked the agitated man.

"I do not come here to accuse; I but ask of what do either complain, calling for patience?"

"Oh! pray, Philip, cease!" she implored. "I will

explain all; I alone am to blame; I used hasty, ill-judged words; I meant something else. My dear father fancied—fancied—I was not happy, not looking so; it was the reflection of his own poor haggard face he saw me by, he has suffered so much."

And she crept to the old man's side, and drew his hand between her own. "Kate!" cried Bateman, all the vigour of life restored to his tone and manner as he cast an arm around her, "you are *not* happy—you fear him. The woman who dreads her husband loves him not. 'Perfect love casteth out fear,' such should be yours for him, or the words which made you one were vain and lying; a loving wife—fearless wife, *never* would cling to even her father, as you to me, her husband by. I adjure you, Kate, tell me all!"

"Now, madam, I trust you are satisfied!" exclaimed Sir Philip with an explosion of rage; "not content with playing the victim to me, who took you from poverty to wealth, but you must persuade your poor, foolish father that I am a tyrant."

"Stop, Sir Philip!" thundered Bateman; "stop there! You have named yourself, no witnesses or accusers are required." As he spoke, he covered the trembling girl with his arms; there was more agitation in her manner, than even her husband's violence, her dread about her father, seemed to call for. "I said I was proud," continued he, "and I should ill prove it were I longer to remain a burden on your charity. I thank Heaven," and he raised his eyes upwards, "I can see now; and the vigour of my mind is unimpaired. I will labour,

as I once so cheerfully did, and in peace eat the sweet bread I earn."

"I might have expected this!" sneered Sir Philip; "those we serve most thank us least, as, for instance, your child."

"For what you have done for me," said Bateman, with a dignity his child was a stranger to, for rough passages in life bring out many unknown resources and energies, "I thank you, receiving it as I did at the hands of a man whom I supposed more than repaid for any kindness towards myself, by the blessing of so fond and good a wife as my Kate; but since you have shewn me the contrary, I am forced most heavily to feel my obligations; but they will not increase, Sir Philip, for this day, I will relieve you of my presence."

Kate almost shrieked as she clung to her father; but she seemed incapable of uttering a word. Sir Philip, despite all he had said, was far from being a bad man; though now urged by conflicting emotions to injustice and harshness, his better feelings were aroused by the manner, and till now unsuspected dignity, of Bateman.

"Far was it from my intention, Mr. Bateman," he said, in a hurried, confused tone, "to imply any thing which should lead to such a decision as this on your part. I beg of you to remain; my home will ever have one, for my wife's father. Kate and I may have our little differences of opinion; but I trust she is well convinced of my affection for her—are you not, Kate?" he held out his hand.

There is in woman's heart a fount of love ever flow-

ing, never stilled,—it must speed on somewhere, even if it be towards a rock on which it breaks. A moment more she clung to her father, and then the arms relaxed, and she placed two kindly, clasping hands in her husband's, and, looking up in his face, her lips uttered in a trembling anxiety, which more than all the past in this sad scene spoke her fear of Sir Philip—

"Philip, I will trust your love; you cannot but grant me all that, when——but no—not all; I will claim a greater share for your unborn child, husband!"

What must be the unnatural dread and doubt of a man in a wife's heart, when she fears telling him that which creates the holiest, purest tie between them? Man forged the marriage one, Heaven created the other mystic link, which should bind two hearts better than aught else of earth. Verily the Jewish code, which makes the barren woman a curse, has in it a thought divine; for the childless marriage is an incomplete, unsanctified bond, wherein no angel and firstling comes, two in one, to stamp the parents one flesh.

A strange, almost unnatural thought of revenge, had made Kate for a length of time withhold this hope from Sir Philip; she was well aware that, by that extraordinary and rather unaccountable feeling which actuates the generality of mankind, he was most desirous of having a son to perpetuate his name, when he should be dust before the wind. For months she had withheld this secret from him, a woman's revenge for slight and wrong, until at last the moroseness of his temper made her fearful of acknowledging it, lest that which raised an

almost inconceivable source of joy in her heart, should be desecrated by his unnatural hatred of the unborn creature. Pity it is that happiness should be so fragile, a thing so easily broken—"precious porcelain of human clay;" for nothing could well have been purer than Sir Philip's joy, nothing more unalloyed than her contentment in the thought that her child would come in a father's smiles.

But to all joy there is a reverse of the picture. Old age is not easily moved to rejoicing, when the young life has been selfish. Mr. Bateman was stern and immoveable in his resolution to leave Sir Philip's, and labour for himself; this Kate firmly hoped effectually to combat, but nothing now could be done. Go he would, and did, and almost sunk again into former selfishness, enough to feel wounded by her firm refusal to leave her husband and his wealth, with him to toil anew as the poor artist!

CHAPTER X.

LIFE is but a chain of events, each link fitting within link; nor is this chain one of purest gold to any—there is bitter alloy and dross mixed in it. Sometimes the links are broken a while; but some cunning artificer re-unites them, and they run on again. The world does not see where the faithless gold gave way, but the wearer does, and never too firmly relies on the outward semblance of strength again.

Sir Philip was all kindness when Bateman was gone; but though Kate strove to be glad, and rejoice in her husband's changed manner, her heart would not consent to entire confidence, but kept ever whispering, "Remember the past." Another cause withheld her from a too firm reliance on him. She could not conceal from herself, that all his attention had an origin purely selfish, arising from his anxiety about the paternal prospect before him. She was nothing in his eyes of herself, her personal claims to his affection as void as ever; but there existed the hourly care for the hoped for heir. It was an all-absorbing thought; so much so, that poor Kate, whose married life had not even in this short space of time, been the brightest, became so nervous at last, that every allusion to the coming event, which should have filled her with sweet joy, produced, on the con-

trary, a sensation so painful that the unbidden tears would not unfrequently start from her eyes in terror, lest the offspring should be a girl; for when the possibility of such a thing had been hinted to Sir Philip, a morose feeling of displeasure took possession of him, which he found it impossible to overcome for hours. It may therefore be easily imagined how much she suffered from foreboding about the result, lest his wishes should be marred. So great was his anxiety, that no desire, however strong, of seeing Mariam, would have induced him to quit The Dyke for town. Again a horrid "if!" Had all been as he wished, the whole current of events would probably have been changed; and he and Kate have become, if not happy, at least content to bear their chain in peace, padlocked together by their son's hands. She had been very desirous of visiting town for a while, to convince herself that her poor father was comfortable; but of a journey Sir Philip would not hear in her state. Bateman wrote despondingly at first; but of late his letters spoke of pupils and contentment, though he still evidently felt indignant with her for remaining with Sir Philip. A momentary, but false peace was around her, for Adair's name was never mentioned by either herself, or her husband; but how hollow all this was, succeeding events proved. Sir Philip was continually building *Chateaux en Espagne*, which he peopled with thoughts of his son and heir; it was truly one of those maniac ideas, driving men mad —sane on all other subjects, lunatic on this.

Time and nature met, and Lady Montgomery's

accouchement ran through the type of every recording newspaper, "of a son and heir."

Those who watch the rich driving, luxuriously cushioned, in magnificent carriages through the streets of London, or who read recorded facts in newspaper paragraphs of joyful events, exclaim, "How happy *they* are!"

Envy them not their outward seemings! Half these are the sorrows and heart-burnings of creatures who would willingly descend from their gilded equipages, to be on foot, poor but happy, like many a toiling labourer; many a newspaper's happy event is a curse, a heart-breaking. Such was Sir Philip's son and heir, for the latter he must be, unless death call him away; and he, the father, who had so watched over this event, heard.

"Sir Philip, you have a son!"

"Thank God!" was the response; for all, the most hardened, unbelieving sinner, like the greatest saint, in sorrow or joy instinctively thinks of him and the breath he breathed into man, flees towards his throne, too often unhappily, though in curses. "Thank God!" said this man, who seldom thought of all His mercies; "can I see him, my boy?" not one thought of poor Kate!

The medical man ('twas he who announced the event) hesitated; the other, impatient, was about to rush off to embrace the wished for heir, the future honour to his name.

"Stop!" cried the doctor, seizing his arm. "Sir Philip, I should like to prepare you, that is, tell you something—in short, it has pleased Heaven to send you

a boy—but, but he is very sickly; in fact, I fear you must prepare for his loss."

"He is dead!" shuddered the father, a pale cast overshadowing his face.

"No, not that *yet;* perhaps it would be better were it so. I fear the poor child may have much to suffer; the truth is, Sir Philip, the boy is deformed."

"Deformed!" gasped his listener; "my son deformed, —an object, and heir too! Will he not die, think ye?"

"It may please Heaven to take him!"

We will not, dare not, record the blasphemy which followed this speech, nor put on paper the words from lips which had blessed Heaven for the child they now parted to curse.

The doctor had deceived him in what he first said. The child was *not* sickly; strong, healthy enough to promise years upon years of life; but if the strong heaving chest and well-inflated lungs spoke of health, there it ceased; nature had tired of her toil, and the unformed, deformed limbs were withered, and hung loosely, uncouthly, from this mere puppet, in force.

Kate knew nothing of this; she had asked, "If her child lived?"

"Yes," was the reply.

"Thank God!" fell from the young mother. "Is it a boy?" was her tremulous question. The *mother* spake first in anxiety for her child's life, the fearing *wife,* in the question of its sex.

"Yes! oh, yes!" was the doctor's reply.

"Then, thank God for that, too!" she exclaimed

in joyful gratitude. "Oh! pray, lose not a moment in telling Sir Philip, and give me my boy here—here," and she held out her arms to enclose it next her heart.

They gave her the child. None durst tell her the truth; and the little thing, whose placid face spoke nothing of the caprice of nature, who had left the rest of her work unperfected, swathed in its many robings, which concealed the lifeless limbs, was placed on its mother's breast. At that moment, so sanctifying was the bond created between Sir Philip and herself by this frail creature, that had it been given her by fairy spell to dissolve her ties with her husband, and become Adair's wife, *losing* the little nestling infant whose tiny hands already caressed her, she would unhesitatingly have clung to what she possessed, and without one regret! Why, oh! why is it, that men so seldom *perfectly* appreciate woman's immense power of love, and gratitude of soul for even *rights?* They see these feelings come forth, and too often drive them back again, like noxious animals driven into some dark retreat to die for want of sunlight!

"Will no one call Sir Philip?" asked the faint voice in beseeching accents, as the moments fled after their fellows away, and away, like "birds which, once let fly, never come again!"

Excuse followed upon excuse. No one could find heart to speak their fears; those around her guessed the truth, and dreaded the moment when the first meeting should take place between the husband and wife.

Hours passed, and at last the weary eyes, tired of watching, closed, and then hours again passed by in the calm sweet slumber after suffering, and the child slept too; and then he—poor little doomed camel-laden bearer of sorrow to his unhappy mother—awoke her from the sweet sleep—such as she *never* would know again. She aroused herself from her dreams to still the little baby voice, with her loving lip pressed tightly to his; and then came the cry, forgotten awhile, "Is not Sir Philip yet come?—oh! pray, send for—seek him to share my happiness!"

But he came not. Some hours later the medical man returned again, and with him an unusual guest to any but a dying woman, the curate of the parish church. He was a staid, peaceful man, with a set mode of speech, and a coldness of manner not much calculated to win a woman to resignation. All have a separate vocation; preach he might, and well—console in affliction, never! But the doctor knew not who to bring to speak the truth. He could cut up a body; he might amputate limbs, close the eyes of death, but, somehow, he could not face a woman in her despair—that green spring plant, which has yet to bud, blossom, wither, and, after a life of these transitions, die!

The curate spoke of suffering, patience, crosses, hopes destroyed. But the voice was cold and monotonous, the eye undimmed; it was not as a father to a child—and then he talked of hopes destroyed! What were they to Kate—a living *boy* on her heart!

He spoke of our hearts' deceptions, and man's little

knowledge of what really would make him happy, &c. &c. The doctor, who had hoped for more aid than he saw likely to be given him in this painful task, grew impatient in his real suffering for her, and when, in the midst of one of the former's exhortations, she raised her anxious cry for "Philip," he advanced, having previously sent all other witnesses away, and, taking the white hand which lay on the coverlet, said, in a husky voice—"Dear Lady Montgomery, I might deceive you, or try to do so; but I have always found in my experience with sorrow, that breaking it for days to a person doomed to hear it at last, is far worse than the first shock. I have one to give you."

"Merciful Heavens!" she shuddered; "Philip is dead?"

"No; on my honour."

"Then he has met some dreadful accident?"

"No; on my word, he is well."

"Something detains him from me, or else he would have come long since to embrace his boy; let me go to him." She made a vain attempt to rise.

"You could not—but you admit that his anxiety to see his *boy* would have brought him, but for some most untoward circumstance!"

"Oh, I am sure, most sure of it!"

The curate endeavoured to interpose, not approving of the other's mode of treating the subject; but the doctor hastily interrupted him, he had brought his patient to the focus he desired, one he felt safest.

"And," he continued, "you know, then, that so great

was Sir Philip's desire to have a son, worthy of his name, worthy of such a mother as yourself, that if the contrary happened, he might in disappointment, and to spare you the pain of witnessing it, absent himself awhile, through real affection for you?"

"Speak, for mercy's sake speak!" she cried. "I cannot understand you! How can I, and my boy here, my own fair child; what fairer could he desire?"

"Lady Montgomery, may that poor boy bless and reward you for your love, and comfort you in all affliction; your husband has left you only for a few days, that you may not be pained in witnessing his grief for both of you. As you say, your child is a fair, sweet boy to the eye, as he lies beside you; but—he is a cripple for life! Heaven so willed it!"

"Oh, my God!" burst from the quivering lips as the stricken mother fell back fainting.

"And may God help her!" uttered the kind man, raising her in his arms and bathing the cold, damp temples.

"You have killed her!" said the other in alarm.

"No, not that—but saved her!" was the reply. "Your words irritated; I saw that wouldn't do. Had we left her, some well-meaning person would have *broken* it to her, and perhaps, before I could arrive, delirium have ensued. *Now* she is in my hands, and sleep will follow this fainting. I shall not leave her; for, after sleep, I trust the keenness of her anguish will have passed, and she be saved."

The event proved his wisdom; poor Kate awoke to grief, despair—oh the very keenest! but it was calm. She looked on the little withered limbs unfolded before her, and the heavy tears fell on them, unfelt by the poor infant; even her holy, sanctifying kiss of a mother's love made no impression, and the more she caressed, the more mighty grew her love, until it became as the gnarled bark of the oak, incasing the sap of the tree for centuries, where all else should fade and wither beside it. It was indeed a holy love, for nothing of earthly pride or vanity desecrated it· she had received a gift from Heaven, and, as coming thence, it could not be but good—as such she cherished it. Kate could not blind herself to her husband's motive in flying them, but she uttered no complaint. The woman seemed all changed; hopeless now of ever winning his love, still she was resolved to suffer all; and, if it might be, win him to, at least, kindness towards his child. She felt a harsh word to the poor afflicted thing would turn her soul against him, even though the boy was insensible to it. Strong in her mother's part, she rose from her bed, resolved to defend and shield her offspring from all who might have the will to wrong or injure it; and when Sir Philip returned, the mother did, what the wife would not have done alone—received him smiling, without one complaint. She pitied where she might justly have condemed; but even this could not move him. A sullen, unconquerable hatred of herself, and disgust to-

wards her child, influenced him; there was but one hope—death, else this deformed creation would become his heir! his——!!!

Poor humanity! to suffer for that which could only happen when he was rottenness and corruption.

CHAPTER XI.

KATE would gladly have remained at The Dyke, nor ventured to town; she had an instinctive dread of what a residence there might bring her in the estrangement she too plainly saw, existing, between Sir Philip and herself. Much she hoped for from time; but the present state of things was hard to bear with. Nothing could induce him to stay an hour longer than was necessary at The Dyke. Indeed he endeavoured to persuade her, that it would be better for herself and child to remain there; but a wife's and mother's duties were too strong in her heart then, for her to leave him alone in temptation, to fall perhaps, and none to save. Besides, she hoped so fondly that he might yet turn in less hatred towards his poor neglected boy, on whom he would not now even look.

Impatiently Sir Philip hastened the day for their departure, since she would not consent to remain.

In decency he could not but escort her to town; he was one of those advocates for public appearances, before which all private slights and injuries counted as nothing—nobody saw them, no one had any right to suspect them. Thus the Montgomeries returned to town, and no sooner there, than he again plunged into

every gaiety, to seek one who had become more than an object of affection and pursuit to him, an oppressive, and restless weight on his mind, incapacitating it from any healthful action; and while he rushed off, after an ever flying vision—Mariam, his afflicted, and yet not comfortless wife (for she loved her poor deformed child so well), spent all her time nursing the object of his disgust, and in visiting her father, who at length became reconciled, in justice, to her, whom he had so unreasonably accused and condemned.

All seemed the same in town, in *statu quo*, as when Kate danced the tutor's humble child, on sufferance at a few balls. Those who rush on railway pace through a novel as through a country, will cry, "What, a whole year, and so little change!"

But, dear readers, we are aiming at nature and truth. Look around, among the many families you know, and you will possibly see year follow year, and the circle remain unbroken even by a marriage, and here you have one, and the birth of a son and heir to crown it.

It was this latter, this hapless child, which caused so much misery; it was ever brought before its repudiating father, in the shape of congratulations from well-meaning friends, who knew nothing of the boy's infirmity.

When Sir Philip carried off his wife so suddenly from the Grange, it was no longer permitted Adair to doubt, that jealousy was the motive which induced the act; and while, on the one hand, it pleased him in the assurance given, that to be jealous, Sir Philip must

love (overlooking the fact that there is *more* jealousy from *self*-love than any other;) on the other, he became so thoroughly tired of all society, she not there to enliven it, that with nearly as little ceremony as Sir Philip had used, he quitted the Grange for the Continent, resolved there to banish all regretful thoughts of England, in gaiety and fresh faces. Before he quitted, a silent rupture had taken place between Mariam and himself; they never spoke, unless on subjects the most commonplace in society, and each felt perfectly convinced of the hatred of the other. So much for man's intellect when prejudiced.

Bateman was residing in a very humble lodging in town, supporting himself entirely. With the inherent obstinacy of his character, he refused the slightest assistance from his child; and shortly after their separation was suffering much from many privations, of which she was kept in ignorance. With a little perseverance, however, he obtained a few pupils, and when Kate returned to town he was not without the necessaries of life, which had wellnigh been the case at first; for by no cleverly invented means could she induce him to take any assistance, coming, as he knew it must, from her husband.

We now find all much the same as when Sir Philip first married; and on a bright May morning, Lady Montgomery drove to Eaton Square, to pay her first visit to Mrs. Adair. She had been out so little since her arrival, which was only a week previously, and had seen no one to inquire from, for Sir Philip rarely spoke to her except in monosyllables, that she was in ignorance

of every thing passing in the Adair family. Indeed, so absorbed had every better thought become in the task imposed upon her, *more* from her boy's infirmity than her actual position of maternity, that she had avoided making any inquiries about Adair, resolving, if woman's good-will might do it, to banish him from her thoughts; for now she held an honour dearer than her husband's in her keeping—her boy's good name.

When she entered Mrs. Adair's, nothing seemed changed since the previous year there; it appeared as if she had had a painful dream, and others, their lucid, waking, everyday existence.

Any person looking on, ignorant of the mere surface in almost every fashionable friendship, would have imagined her to be the pet of the family—the dear friend, long and anxiously expected. Mrs. Adair embraced her on both cheeks; Angelina—for her, most warmly pressed her hands; and the one who perhaps felt the most kindly towards her kept aloof, and only bowed, where others wished their hollow wishes of joy.

Kate was so perfectly well aware of the cynical character of Angelina, that when she commenced expressing deep regret that Lady Montgomery had not brought her dear boy with her, this lady was immediately on her guard against the shafts she expected momentarily. Poor Kate, though saying nothing on the subject, was most acutely sensitive respecting the infirmity of her boy, not alone for himself, for she felt as if her love were all-sufficient to shield him against all; but her husband's estrangement in consequence, had made her so

nervously susceptible, that she felt at times as if the poor infant had some fearful leprosy, to make all fly him and herself. Angelina's inquiries, however, arose from a lingering hope of appearing *a woman* (a thing she began to question) in Narcissus's eyes; for he appeared completely to regard her as some neutral creation not yet classed by naturalists, incapable of entering into the human feelings of a woman—still less, a mother. He was there; so she resolved to try his heart by her warmly expressed interest in the newly-born. When we have a sore point, how we shrink from every touch approaching near it; we are very lapwings, fluttering and shrieking at a distance, to lure all from their nest.

Kate's painful embarrassment was not a little increased by the unexpected arrival of her husband, who seemed little pleased to see her there.

The meeting between himself (it was the first since his return) and Mariam, was reserved on his side in outward seeming; on hers, cold in the extreme. No one knew the depth and purity of this much-mistaken girl's heart; it was full of generous feeling, but a fear ever withheld her from evincing any. Something—that uncontrollable sympathy whose birthplace is in the soul, hidden from human search—made her, since the other's marriage, long to speak more freely than she had hitherto done to Lady Montgomery. She felt she was not happy, and she also felt that it might be a mission her heart was called to, to solace this poor pilgrim, who had chosen one of the rougher roads to home, though in the world's eye a bright and happy one. No

one, of any discernment, could be ten minutes in the society of Sir Philip and his wife without perceiving that for some cause they were perfectly estranged. He had one virtue—he was no hypocrite; and, falsely imagining himself in every way injured by Kate, both in his marriage and in the birth of this blot to his name, he took no pains to conceal his disgust, he rather proclaimed it.

"We have just been congratulating Lady Montgomery on the recent auspicious event," said Mrs. Adair, "and blaming her for not bringing the boy, with his nurse, to see old friends like ourselves."

"You must be very proud of your son," chimed in Angelina, glancing at Narcissus, who was cutting the pages of a pamphlet.

"Philip is not fond of *very* young children," hazarded Kate, timidly, seeing the gathering cloud on his brow; the woman was all changed since she had a child to protect, for its sake her *hauteur* had disappeared, and she was all fear and watchfulness.

"Pardon me, I *do* like young children," responded he, "when they are such as call for affection."

"What a strange speech!" laughed Angelina, with her cold effort at gaiety.

"You really, Sir Philip, imply that your own is a disagreeable one!"

"Philip means," answered Kate hastily, her hitherto pale cheek dyed with blushes, "that our boy is rather cross; so he is, poor child! He is not very well, and at times peevish."

Mariam fixed her full eye on the face of the speaker, seeming to read her inmost soul.

"What is your boy's name, Lady Montgomery?" asked Narcissus, intending to ask a pleasant question of a young mother.

"Richard," fell from her lips, and the blush on her cheek deepened—deepened with regret and annoyance; for this had been one of the worst steps she could have taken against her husband's ever liking the boy. One day, in his indignation and disgust, he had ordered her not to christen it after himself, and, instead of doing so—a thing which would eventually have pleased, inasmuch as *all* like a little flattery, and this would have been so very natural a proof of a lingering love on her part—she permitted a glimpse of her former hasty, thoughtless temper to guide her, and hastening off, had the boy christened "Richard." If any one thing could have added to the father's hatred, this did from that moment; he never permitted it to be brought into his presence, and, as she persisted in nursing it, the breach widened even to separate apartments.

"How very strange!" exclaimed both Mrs. Adair and Angelina, in a breath. Mariam's heart leaped, and still no feeling but pity rose predominant; there was to her keen perceptiveness, rendered doubly so by her affections, so desolate a tone in that one painfully pronounced name, that the Christian triumphed over the momentary feeling of woman's jealousy, and reading a whole history of sorrow, even perhaps *guilt* in Kate's manner, she rose, and with a freedom from all embarrassment

new to her, approached where Lady Montgomery sate, seeing, without knowing why, that the subject pained her, and, drawing a seat close to hers, said, holding up the purse she was knitting—"Lady Montgomery, I think I saw you making a purse like this at the Grange; I am dreadfully stupid, will you shew me how these pearls are to be turned?"

Kate looked in surprise at the cold girl, who heretofore had never once directly addressed her; the memory of something once uttered in her defence, crossed her mind; she raised her eyes to Mariam's, and met hers, fixed upon her so full, so pityingly, that she mentally exclaimed, "She has the most beautiful, soulful eyes, I ever beheld; they *cannot* be deceitful."

"Willingly," smiled Kate, drawing off her gloves. Sir Philip frowned; sympathy towards his wife was reprehension of himself.

"Is Mr. Adair godfather?" asked Narcissus, who never could see when mundane things went wrong.

"Oh, pray, Mr. Browne!" exclaimed Mariam, firmly and impatiently, "have a little mercy on poor Lady Montgomery. However excellent a mother may be, she like others requires recreation from the cares of her nursery. You cannot see distinctly here," she added, addressing Kate, "if you do not fear the trouble, in the inner room we shall have more light."

"Really, Miss Lincoln!" exclaimed Angelina, annoyed at the interruption of what she plainly saw was a disagreeable subject, to unravel the wherefore all her energies were exerted—"you have a most dictatorial

manner; I might add, were it not for your advantages of——"

"Face or fortune?" interrupted Mariam with a liveliness of manner to which all were strangers; but this poor girl was only spirit-broken as regarded herself, the oppressed had ever a warm advocate in her.

"Lady Montgomery will forgive me, I am sure, will you not?" she continued, addressing Kate, who had risen with alacrity to follow her. "For I have removed for a while from her sight, the paraphernalia on memory, of the nursery."

Kate could not speak; much trouble had so subdued her; she felt, to utter a word would be to lay all her sorrows in weeping before those present, who would have rejoiced in them. There was nothing said in thanks; but her tone was so gentle in its intonation, as she directed one, who quite as well as herself knew the intricacies of the purse she held, that Mariam was well rewarded; and while she pondered on the meaning of the scene, felt convinced the truth about her child was known—but how? was the puzzle; and while Sir Philip sat half-concealed by the back of a *prie-dieu*, turning over some drawings with Angelina, a servant flung open the door, and rushing in hastily, half unannounced, Mrs. Bruce appeared. Angelina was facing her, she nodded, Sir Philip's back was turned, she was too full of her news to notice who he might be.

Lady Montgomery and Mariam were apart in the embrasure of a window. Mrs. Bruce was one of those who never take precautionary measures, consequently

the results of her love for tale-bearing were not always pleasant to herself.

"Oh, my dear Mrs. Adair!" she exclaimed, grasping her hand, I have just heard the most awful event," (her back was turned to all the others.) "But I knew," she continued in a breath, "that a judgment would overtake her—did I not always say so?—for her iniquitous conduct towards Bruce, poor weak fool!"

"Of whom are you speaking?" hastily inquired Angelina, guessing the truth about the persons to whom she alluded; her malicious nature gasping for the breath of scandal and suffering to others.

"Why, of the Montgomeries to be sure," she replied, half turning. Mariam spoke loudly to deaden the voice; she even cried, "Mrs. Bruce, Lady Montgomery."

The rest was lost in the former's loud tone of excitement. Angelina affected to be incapable of interrupting her; Mrs Adair uttered hush! but nothing could silence the lady.

"I know what you would say," she continued, "that it is uncharitable; but my dear friend, we are only friends here, and I know it will not go farther."

Malice and curiosity let her run on; good-will might have easily stopped her. "Only fancy," was her voluble cry, "what Sir Philip's rage and indignation must be, he who longed so much for an heir. Well, now he has one!" and she laughed aloud—"a poor, maimed, deformed——"

CHAPTER XII.

"For Heaven's sake, Mrs. Bruce," exclaimed Mariam, springing towards her, and seizing her arm, "hush!" Mrs. Bruce, so energetically summoned to silence, looked round, and, dropping into a chair, gave a hysterical kind of giggle.

"Indeed, Sir Philip!—indeed, Lady Montgomery! I did not see you, or I never should have hinted at this painful event; but I was so shocked when I heard it, that some excuse may be made for my wishing to unburden my mind."

Kate could not articulate; she grasped the arm of the chair on which she was seated in cold agony. Her heart felt turned to ice, foreseeing all which might accrue to herself from Sir Philip's fury at the publication of this misfortune, which she had so sedulously concealed from all except those immediately about her child; and even these she had enjoined to secresy, for her husband's sake, not her own; for, had the boy been a model of beauty, it would probably never have been half so dear to its mother as this poor little helpless creature, which claimed a so much greater share of her love, for the disgust borne towards it by others. Every word Mrs. Bruce had uttered cut Sir Philip to the soul

in what he had of pride; he said little, but the pale cheek denoted his bitter annoyance.

"Mrs. Bruce!" was all he uttered; "you might perhaps fulfil a happier office than promulgating truths, the more painful that they are so, to the world; yes!" and he glanced at Mariam, who stood near Lady Montgomery, silent and pitying, yet not daring to give utterance to her sympathy, lest the wounds of this suffering woman should burst out afresh, as they are said to do at the touch of the murderer; for something told her that in all this sorrow she had a share to atone for.

"Yes!" he cried, "our first—my heir—is a deformed cripple!"

"But not the less to be loved for his affliction," said Mariam, energetically; "we should pity those so afflicted, and pity is ever a forerunner of love."

"And he is so patient, so gentle, my poor boy," almost whispered the mother, glancing imploringly at her husband.

"I am sure I grieve for what has been said here!" exclaimed Mrs. Adair; "but why let such an event wound you so deeply, he will not probably be the sole claimant for your affections."

"Madam, you forget," said Angelina, resolved nothing should soothe poor Kate's heart—she was so envious of this tutor's daughter—"that this poor unhappy child will be the representative by priority of birth, of Sir Philip's name."

"Perhaps it may not be an irremediable infirmity,

my dear," said Mrs. Adair, really in kindness; "what *is* the matter with him? Why did you never speak of this before? I am truly grieved to hear it for both your sakes."

"For the love of Heaven! Mrs. Adair," cried Kate, rising and clasping her hands in irrepressible agony, "let this most painful subject drop; you little know the pain it gives me."

Narcissus looked up, and said something not devoid of feeling, about "bearing our crosses with patience."

"That is the very thing I fear you do not do, Lady Montgomery," sighed Angelina, with a hypocritical drawl; "I use the privilege of one who knew you when herself learning many a wholesome lesson, from your father's teaching, and speak this way to you in charity. Oh, if you would benefit by the advice of our most loving and zealous pastor, Mr. Browne!"

Even *this* won her not a step in Narcissus' favour. He was unluckily then thinking how much improved Mariam had become of late—a year had so greatly matured her beauty, by stamping it with more confidence in her self-reliance, so very different to self-esteem.

"Is Mr. Adair at home?" asked Sir Philip abruptly, to change the conversation.

"Of course not," sneered Angelina, who had been watching the direction of Narcissus's eyes; "we never see him now."

"He *says* he is studying, does he not?" asked Mrs. Bruce; "does any one know what?"

"Or where?" fell from his sister.

"I trust I may be more fortunate in meeting him when next I call," said Sir Philip rising; "I wanted to speak to him about a lady's horse I wish to purchase from him, and which he purposes selling, I hear."

"A gallantry for your wife, I presume?" asked Mrs. Bruce.

"I never ride *now!*" fell from Kate, who had sunk, almost overcome with her emotion, on her chair.

Mariam sighed, yet not audibly; for the sale of this horse, which had been purchased to please her, seemed another and last tie broken between herself and Richard.

"I have no direct object," said Sir Philip, carelessly, "except to buy a fine animal, useless to him, and which Lady Montgomery may make use of if she please."

He spoke more graciously than usual, not wishing all to know the real state of estrangement between Kate and himself. As he spoke, he rose and said—

"Kate, if you are going towards Pall Mall, will you drop me; I have sent my brougham away."

"Willingly," was the reply, and the alacrity with which she rose, fully harmonized with the word. How much we can forgive, for the sake of benefiting those we love; she never for an instant lost sight of her boy's interests with his father.

Mariam had stood by her; the first impulse of defending her gone, she feared intruding where an evident prejudice had existed against her; but when Kate turned to wish her good-morning, their eyes met, and involuntarily both extended a hand, the first time theirs had ever met.

The carriage rolled away with the husband and wife, leaving their characters indeed behind, to be lacerated by envy.

Sir Philip had no longer the feeling of policy to guide him, and the reality of his disposition towards Kate, burst forth with double enmity from his having been in Mariam's presence. Sarcasm followed sarcasm, until at length he declared his firm intention of sending the hated child of her love from home, that at least the eyesore might not for ever be before him, and people ever reminded of its existence, to reproach him with it—in fact it should be as if it had never been. Heaven might in mercy take it; if not, none would know it until he should be removed from all suffering on its account. He could not see why the law should forbid the putting away an object, disgraceful to the family it would otherwise represent, as well as the permitting a husband to divorce a faithless wife; either was a blot on the escutcheon of a line, hitherto *sans reproche,* for most generally, the mind bore the imprint of the form, and the cold cynical heart, and venomous tongue, were as mirrors in which the deformed reflected themselves, through vengeance, in all their hideousness on mankind. Kate bit her lip; the heart feared to give utterance to its suffering; her aim was conciliation, but how she hated and despised the man at that moment! How immense the barrier he was raising between them! one, nothing could overleap. Much more he said, until, maddened by her silence, he swore by Heaven he would

consult the law, whether in equity this child could claim its right by birth!"

Oh, then! with these cruel, unnatural words, all the woman—the right judging woman—was roused within her, and far more—the mother.

"And you dare," she cried, her nostril dilating in scorn, "to name Heaven in so diabolical a cause as this repudiation of the creature it has afflicted so much! and to me, the mother, who in hope bore its burden for so many months, and in deep, though sorrowful love, these three! Oh, I would I knew Heaven better, that I might confide more in its care for my helpless boy—for *I fear you!*"

No words can adequately convey the force of these last words, and the action as she uttered them, which made her shrink from him into a corner of the carriage, removing even her dress from all contact, as though he were to her accursed, and an object of loathing—he stared speechless at her an instant, then hastily pulling the check-string, muttered under his breath, "Well, madam, we shall see! for the present, I leave you to your ruminations."

"Yes, go!" she whispered, as the carriage stopped, and the man appeared to let down the step; "go, and may God pardon you, for you are so bad a man I fear you!"

Without a word he descended, and Kate gave the order, "To Mr. Bateman's," and the carriage rolled off, the envy of many who looked at its well-appointed

ensemble, and lovely though pale occupant, for sorrow had matured the baby face to one of expressive beauty; and these many dreamed not of the aching grief, whose strong life was counted by the quick beating of her almost breaking heart.

"Mr. Bateman not at home!" she exclaimed to the girl who opened the door, for she had descended at once, herself. "Then I will walk in and wait. Will he be long?"

"I think not, my lady," was the reply; "for his pupil, who comes nearly every day, is waiting for him in the little back parlour; will your ladyship please walk into the front one?"

"Any where, I care not, so I see him. And has it come to this!" she cried, pacing the room when the girl had closed the door. "All gone, all gone—my early hopes, my married ones—and now he would take my child!—No, by all a mother *can* do when she will, he never shall." And the quick step broke in measured, but hurried tread on the ear.

Up and down that room she walked, the groan not unfrequently bursting from the impatient bosom, as she turned disappointedly from the window, where she paused at every turn, to look out anxiously for her father.

"Oh, Richard, Richard!" she exclaimed aloud in her impatient agony, "would I had dared all, done all, to prove my love and win yours, sooner than this life of misery!"

Poor Kate! she knew not that remorse would have

stood ever between her and true happiness; and the deeper her love and sacrifices, the less man would have appreciated them, as things too cheaply purchased by him, even though a woman's life and immortal hopes went in the scale to balance his love of a day!

As she spoke, the door of the inner room very gently opened, and some one entered,—when she turned, her spirit cry had summoned a companion, and Richard Adair stood there.

"Kate!" he exclaimed, smiling; "Kate, and in heroics?"

"Richard!" and the arms were round his neck, reckless, clinging, yet without one thought of harm; he was only to her some one in whom her heart might trust, some one to smooth the rough pathway for her bleeding feet.

"Oh! thank Heaven you are here, but how?"

"How? never mind; instinct sent me of course to see Bateman, knowing you would come; but what has occurred, dear Katty?" and, loosing her arms, he seated her on the sofa, and fondly, as a loving brother might have done, held both her hands in his own.

The tongue untied by the assurance of one to sympathize with her, she commenced telling him the tale, so little suspected, of all her wretchedness, her misery about her child. As she spoke, the tears almost suffocated her.

"My poor girl—my poor Kate!" he tenderly whispered, really affected enough to feel the eyes dim with those tears which disgrace no man. "I never dreamed this; I will own to you, I feared a little prejudice against

Sir Philip made you harsh in your judgment, and not always quite just; forgive me, darling Katty, and may God help you, my poor girl!"

"Direct me, guide me, Richard. Tell me what I can do, for my trouble is very bitter; for myself I care nothing *now*. We grow unselfish when those we love best on earth are in sorrow, supplicants on our sympathies; I only think of my child—what he may have to endure, when sense will make all so acute to him."

"Your poor boy, your unfortunate child, love him, cherish him well, Kate; he will reward you some day, believe it so. Do you know, dear girl, so grossly selfish are we, I——" he paused suddenly.

"What, Richard? what were you going to say?" and, releasing one hand, she placed it upon his shoulder, and looked up confidingly in his face.

"Never mind," he answered, "I ought not to say it; you must love your boy now, let *that* fill your heart."

"I read half your thought," she replied, sighing deeply. "I must love none other now; it is a holy love, that of a mother for a deformed child, it is so entirely hers, and Heaven's. No one else cares for it. Fear not, Richard, if he, Philip, will but leave me in peace, and you comfort me as *you* may, and *I* accept, I will place no unholy affection beside my afflicted child; only do not desert me, I have none but you."

"I never will, Katty, never!" and he drew her in all kindly affection, and indeed in purity, on his bosom.

He had too noble a nature for a sensual thought to mar his generous one for this suffering girl.

"And now tell me your thought," she said.

"Oh! a foolish, bad one. I had loved you so well once, that I felt jealous when I heard of your son's birth. I knew you so well, I felt your pure heart, however temptation might have led you to harm, (you see I am candid, Kate,) would turn, all engrossed by its tie of duty and love, to your helpless child; forgive me the bad, selfish thought, which made me fear the loss of the affection you possessed for me."

Such confessions are ill-judged, and most criminal; they *can* alleviate no pain, and cherish affections better forgotten. Adair felt this, when the sobbing head dropped on his bosom, and Kate—all the Kate of their first temptation—clung to him, beseeching him, "through all, through good report, ill report," not to forsake her, to let her quit Sir Philip's roof, and, protected by his brotherly love, knowing their own innocence, defy the world!

"You must be mad to think such a position possible, Kate!" he exclaimed, shrinking in self-fear from the arms which clung to him. "What are we? are we more than mortal for such a mad fancy to find place an instant in your mind; and the world—your child—think what it would lose in a mother's blighted fame, even supposing innocence possible!" The arms fell powerless on her knee, and the clenched hands resting thereon, alone told her self-combat. Adair looked down upon

her; he was almost convulsed with restrained emotions. He would fain have taken the sorrowing woman to his heart and comforted her. Of himself, he never one moment thought; had he done so, unhesitatingly, he would have saved, whilst he lost her, from the fate she so dreaded with her husband.

"Kate, you try me too severely!" he cried, springing from the sofa, and crossing the room with hasty strides; "if I only consulted my anxiety about you, I never should permit you to return to him again; but I dare not—will not."

"Tell me one thing, Richard," whispered she, following, and laying a hand on his arm; "comfort me with the assurance that you do not love another; not Miss Lincoln, for I try to like that girl. I would love, not hate her to-day, for her Christian kindness towards me."

How tell her he *did* love another?

"No, Kate—no; decidedly not, I do assure you—will that comfort you?" and once again his hands clasped hers, and he spoke of her father, her son, of his own protecting affection, until the wild excitement of her manner calmed into peace.

"I have less uneasiness about my father," she said, "than about my boy; for my father would lose nothing. He accepts nothing; my acts could not injure him."

"'Tis a pity, Kate!"

"Why a pity?"

"Because it would be a tie the stronger against yourself."

"Then, too, my father has pupils now, one who

comes every day. I know this has been great assistance to him, and comfort to me, when his pride has placed a barrier over my purse. By the way," she added hastily in alarm, "the servant told me now, I remember, that the pupil was here, awaiting him. Good Heavens! can he have overheard all?" She flew towards the inner room, and opened the door—it was, however, empty.

"Never fear," he said, smilingly, following and drawing her back; "he left when I came in here; he said he should not take a lesson to-day."

At that moment Bateman opened the door of the room; he had entered the house with his latch key.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Ah, Kate!" exclaimed Bateman, as his daughter fondly embraced him; "what has brought you here to-day? How d'ye do, my boy?" he continued, nodding to Richard, who was endeavouring to make him an accomplice in some mystery, apart from Kate's comprehension, by all sorts of strange signs; but Bateman was not of the sphinx genus.

"I came, father, to see you sooner than you expected; I wanted to see you."

The "wanted to see you," in its meaning so comprehensive to Adair, of the poor unsupported woman, seeking extraneous strength against ill, was quite lost on the matter-of-fact Bateman.

"Were you not surprised to find Richard here, too?" he asked.

Before Adair could reply, her father said, "Oh, no! of course not; for, since you have both met, naturally he has told you the truth, and when he begged me to keep it a secret from you, I told him you would certainly meet him here some day, and then you would know who my pupil was."

All this time Adair had been endeavouring to silence

Bateman; but the other, with admirable by-play, gave him to understand the folly of further mystery.

"Then he, Richard, has been your good, attentive pupil, of whom you spoke to me, in fact your principal——" she paused; "support" she would have said, but the word fell unuttered; she feared alarming her father's great delicacy.

"Pshaw! let us drop the subject, Kate," exclaimed Adair hastily; "the fact is, I grew so tired of the world and its hollow pleasures, that I sought Minerva, and growing wiser, commenced a long-threatened study, engineering, to teach which my old tutor here was fully competent, and I made him be silent to you, Katty; I am so old a man in some things, that I feared being quizzed as a great schoolboy."

He laughed, but she was very grave, not one word or hidden thought to her father, was a mystery to her keener perception; she read all his generosity in self-sacrificing time and pleasures, to force the old man to receive *earned* support from him. She was very grave, a holy look came over her face as the tears rolled over her cheek, blessing the good deed and the donor. She did not utter one word, but her trembling hand clasped his, and this woman, strong in resolution and good-will before, to battle against her love for him, now felt how impossible it would be *ever* to lose or forget him.

Surely the devil, when foiled in evil ways to tempt us, filches and labours with even consecrated tools for our ruin!

It was from a scene like this, where one man, and the last she should have permitted her mind to dwell too much upon, had shone forth in colours so glorious to a generous mind, that Kate returned home; to draw the comparison between the two, her allotted master, and the one who governed her every spiritualized thought, her physical tyrant—her mental idol. She returned, to find tears and dismay in her household; in that part of it sacred to her private, holy toil of care for her boy. Not all Sir Philip could urge, had had any weight in inducing her to cast upon a hireling the charge of her unfortunate child. She made it a labour of duty at first, and that feeling had become elevated into one of so much love, that many a tear, forced to her eyelid by her husband's harshness, flowed gently back, or was dried up in the smile which reflected one beaming on her from her helpless infant. She returned, Sir Philip, driven to desperation, and the injustice which his better feelings reprehended, by the annoyances and sarcasms of the day, still more by the vindictive remembrance of Mariam's evident coincidence with his wife, thereby casting open blame on himself, had, without further consideration, brought a wet nurse to the house, one recommended by a neighbouring medical man; and Kate returned, to find her child's attendant wringing her hands in despair, knowing what her pain would be; others busily engaged packing up, and all prepared for an immediate departure for The Dyke, as if by sending away this hateful object to him, he could

obliterate its existence. An hour later, and the mother would have found her child gone.

Heaven made man after its own modelling, but the world and the devil sadly disfigure him with their varnishes of many kinds; Sir Philip's had a very adhering —two in one—family pride and name. And these made an otherwise inoffensive man, do demon's work.

Such was the intended separation of a mother from her crippled child. Kate stood a moment transfixed with horror; the scene she had just come from, with its generous balm to the heart, and the one she met, with all its ignoble mire deluging the soul from whence it sprung. But one moment she stood listening to all, and then without premeditated idea, she sprang down the stairs, and entered the library, where she understood Sir Philip was, just as he was placing his hat on his head to go out, not quite feeling at ease in the scene he foresaw when his wife should return, which he had not expected for some hours.

He visibly changed countenance when she entered, and then forcibly assumed an ease of manner, which sate ill upon the first involuntary show of emotion.

"Sir Philip," she began breathlessly, then with one hand pressed on her heart to still its breathing, she changed her tone to one of supplication, of mother's prayer, "Philip," she resumed, "I come to ask—though certain there must be some misapprehension of the orders you gave—have you thought, or spoken of sending—but no; you could not, I am sure you could not;"

and she drew near, and grasped his unwilling hand, which lay cold, without a returning pressure, in hers. "Tell me," she continued, scarcely above her breath; "you did not dream of parting me from my child—did you? You intended *both* of us to return to The Dyke. I am not well, Philip, the country air would benefit me much; I shall be ready in an hour—less, and then——"

"Stop, Lady Montgomery," he said, dropping his hand from her clasping ones, and moving back a step; "I foresaw this scene; I had hoped all would have been over before your return, for my mind is made up. That boy *and his nurse*," he accentuated the words, "leave this house at once!"

Her swelling heart dilated the fine nostril, yet still she overcame her indignation in her agony.

"But I—only I—am his nurse, dear Philip. You once were just and kind; in what have I wronged you, that my child is as a curse before you?"

"You have said it, madam; it is a curse, to my sight, my hearing, to all my faculties, that I—I—should be father to deformity and idiotcy, for such the medical man pronounces his expectation. Surely that imp was begotten in some hour yielded up to the reign of Satan, for he has been a curse ever since his birth."

"Not to me—oh, not to me!" uttered the trembling, horror-stricken woman. "I have counted every moment blest since he drew my breast; for as he drew the draught of life, Philip, it seemed as though he infused peace, and with peace heaven into my soul, often before turbulent and in revolt."

"I have no doubt you mean this for pathos," he coldly said, making an effort to pass towards the door; "but for both our sakes, since we are doomed to wear chains which we can no longer view as other than of leaden weight, we should endeavour to remove all which makes them more so. That child is my bane; once away, I may in some measure forget its existence."

"Then let it go, Philip, and me with it; we will go to The Dyke."

"No!" he thundered, his brow knitting. "Do you think I want more scandal and whispered innuendoes? Is it not enough that I know you *loved*—still love, Richard Adair, as the naming that child after him proves, without your departure from my roof? What would the world say then, but that you had fled with him? Mine, unfortunately you are; and in you, by you, my name shall be respected!"

There was a pause—it was the woman's struggle between her policy and affections; the latter conquered.

"Then hear *me!*" she cried; "I have been a true, and, till you forced me otherwise, affectionate wife to you; loving—no—I love, never loved but Richard Adair! I glory in my love, for he is worthy of it; and it is in comparing him with others, I know the gold from the dross! I owe you this in all candour, that you may exult in your own perspicacity;" her lip curled in scorn. "Nevertheless, in respect to you, while I deemed you merited it, I would have called *your* son after you; you repudiated it, I called it Richard, and under one name united two affections, as pure as woman's ever were!"

"Pure!" he uttered, almost speechless with rage; "are you sure?—sure the imp has not been named after its own?"

"Hold!" she cried, with truthful energy, which even he could not doubt. "What I am, you may unblushingly own; what I *may* be, will be your work. Had I wronged you, not an hour should one roof have covered us! Ah! you will separate my child—my sinless child—from its mother; you will make a hireling press it to her purchased breast; you will make it less than the brute, which draws its dam's milk; and you will bid me dry up nature's stream, gushing like water from a rock at Heaven's will, and sit down quietly, crossing my hands and blessing you as the agent under that high Heaven for all blessings! No, man! *It* sends blessings—*you* would pervert them; the breath in me is from above, and I use it as such should be used—to breathe my disgust!"

Before he could reply or move, the maddened, excited woman turned and fled from the room. He stood a moment to recover, not from his amazement, but to gain audacity enough and false reasoning to say:—"It shall be as I will—I am right; only this energetic resolution can restore any thing like comfort to my now wretched home!"

As he uttered this, he opened the door, and, calling his confidential valet, left orders that the nurse and child within an hour should leave for The Dyke. Even before this man he had a sense of shame, and with the sophistry of an unquiet conscience said in excuse—"Lady Mont-

gomery is destroying her health with her son, the doctors have ordered his removal from her till weaned; see it quietly but expeditiously done—it is my order."

So saying, he went forth, leaving a menial the no pleasant or easy task of separating such a mother from such a child.

The man pondered a few moments; he knew his master peremptory, but then he had an hour. Thus reflecting, he went to consult the housekeeper, one not over well disposed to the young wife, mistress, where she had reigned alone before Sir Philip's marriage; not that Kate ever interfered with her, but she was an upstart in this woman's eyes; rival clans, for there is, with *few* exceptions, no clanship more united against an inimical one, than the servant clique against its master! Whilst valet and housekeeper consulted, and he drew draughts of courage from her arguments and persuasions against "the poor, beggarly tutor's child, only a servant like themselves, and not half so good, maybe," Kate dismissed all from her nursery, and then hastily wrapping her son in the large shawl she was enveloped in on entering from her father's, opened the door cautiously, crept down the stairs, the hall-porter swung open the entrance, unnoticing the concealed burden, and mother and child went forth.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE rest is a record of sorrow and weakness—of the vain struggle of a mere human nature, unassisted by the spiritual strength it had never been taught to know. A record of that perversity of vision which makes us only see present vengeance, and not future woe and retribution; or, that *certain* reward *even* here, full often, where we bear oppression and wrongs with patience—that gift divine sent to help us onward.

Kate fled to a quiet hotel, and there she sate about a couple of hours after the foregoing events, with Richard Adair, whom she had summoned to advise with her. In doing so, not one thought of harm guided her; she was too much excited to dream of aught but the safety of herself and child from the slave-curse—separation.

"Richard, tell me what I must do!" cried she, flushed and trembling; "I fear every step, I dread the entrance of that man to tear my child from me."

"Katty, dear, I cannot advise you," he answered, and the thoughtful forehead leant upon both hands, buried in the curls of his hair, his elbows resting on the table.

"I cannot go back; you would not have me do *that*,

would you?" And she gazed fearfully on him, dreading he might command her to do so.

"Oh! no—no," he uttered, passing his hand convulsively through his hair, and looking up; "not that, Kate."

"I could not sacrifice my child—could I?" and the trembling woman drew near, behind him, and both arms rested on his shoulders. "It would have killed me to have given my Richard to a hireling."

"Is *his* name Richard?" he asked, looking hastily up, and a gleam of ill-suppressed satisfaction beamed from his eyes. It was vanity—nothing more.

"Yes, I did not tell you before to-day; I thought you would blame me; but when Philip refused me *his* name which in good feeling I asked, I almost rejoiced at his unkindness, for I was privileged to choose one—yours."

"It was unwisely done, Katty;" as he said this, his arm encircled and supported the agitated woman, leaning against his chair for support.

There was a silence—a long one, for two so circumstanced; and as he thought, and passed his disengaged hand over the heated brow, whose starting veins told the war within him, his cheek grew very pale;—it was not that he feared consequences, or calculated for himself, but for her. He felt at that supreme moment, much as he loved her, it was too sincere an affection to seek her ruin, too purely intending, and not all-sufficient, to war in this world against the wrong he might be led into inflicting upon her, a wrong he could not excuse

to himself; he never thought of Heaven, or his condemnation there; his thoughts were all earthy, though conscientious, and consequently the mere world, which *alone* ever leads to error, went not out of its beaten track this time.

"Katty," he said, at length, "I can never desert you! I could not answer it to my conscience or heart. Bateman never can protect you; *here*, you are entirely in Sir Philip's power, my poor girl—my poor Kate! Come, let us go. *I* will be a father to your boy; you can trust me—can you not?"

Strange, inscrutable mechanism that we are! Here was a woman who had more than once thought of, almost urged flight, with the one now beside her, and yet, when the moment for action came, she shuddered, and shrank back. Truly there is an angel ever within us, fighting with darker powers which too often drive out its patient loveliness, by their strength of evil. Kate had become a purified being, since nature called all her beauties of soul into play, to protect its boon confided to her, though, in strange mockery of kindness, it made the gift a deformity, and to her a curse; but such are all things, curses or blessings, as we use them. Her good angel pointed weeping, to the helpless child, beseeching her to spare its already suffering body from the burden of her shame. Another spirit spoke of Richard—Richard, now hers *if she willed it* now and *for ever*; the love of her girlhood, who would be a father to her son—hers, only hers. Then she thought of her husband's dishonour; *hers* she overlooked. She only

saw his name trailing in the dust, deformed, disgraced—oh! far beyond any thing his child could have inflicted—and revenge triumphed. The angel wept, the demon rejoiced—for Adair and Kate left country, fame, all; and while Sir Philip, who, despite his words, felt full confidence in her virtue, sought her in compunction of spirit at her father's, every where, and finding all search in London vain, despatched messengers to The Dyke, whither he felt convinced at last she had fled, she and Adair were on their swift journey to the continent.

Once consenting, Kate grown desperate in her wrongs and desire of revenge, became perfectly calm, and almost happy. What was the world to her? Had she not all she loved with her? But Adair, too uncalculating, too kind-hearted to think of himself, when another was at stake, felt the chill of hopes for ever destroyed—of a wrong act committed, even though done in manliness of heart, towards an oppressed woman. Until this moment, he had not truly known how dear Mariam was, now for ever lost, for such he felt her; nor was he fully aware how little he really loved Kate, except as a sister. But she had thrown herself on his protection, desert her, he could not.

It would be vain to attempt portraying the surprise of all, the agony of one, when the elopement became known. Mariam's secret, until then hidden from all but Elton, burst forth to light in uncontrolled intensity, the greater that it had lain restrained and concealed.

Sir Philip was the one to announce his wife's flight; he came to Eaton Square, *hoping*, for his conscience

was clamorous against him, that Kate was there, or that Mariam, whose character he in part rightly judged, had, with a resolution stronger than is common to one so young, connived at the concealment, and knew the abode of the former. This was on the second day, when his messenger returned from The Dyke, after vainly seeking Lady Montgomery there. Sir Philip entered; he was very pale, and a restless trouble stood in his eye. After inquiring with an absent air about their various healths, he hurriedly asked, "If Lady Montgomery had been there?" As he did so, he fixed his glance on Mariam's face, which was perfectly calm.

"Not since yesterday morning," was the reply, "when you quitted together."

Not a thought of the truth had crossed his mind; he imagined her playing a real game of hide and seek, to alarm him. He briefly stated that having, by her medical man's advice, brought a nurse to the house to relieve Kate from the cares of nursing, she had, in a moment of impetuosity, quitted it with her son. How very pathetic and just we can make all appear by *ex-parte* statements!

"I wish Richard were in town," said Mrs. Adair, innocently; "I make no doubt he could find her ladyship's abode, but he has gone down to some steeple-chase, I think, he merely says 'the country,' in his note which I have just received."

"Have you been to Mr. Bateman's?" asked Angelina; "but," she added ironically, "I do not suppose Lady

Montgomery would like the reminiscences his poor lodging might bring of gingham gowns, and straw bonnets."

"I should imagine," hazarded Mariam, who seldom now permitted Angelina's innuendoes to pass unnoticed against herself or others, "that so excellent a daughter as Lady Montgomery has ever shewn herself, would seek her father's protection before all other." Not one shadow of the truth darkened her pure mind; but there was a fearful awakening prepared for her. The door opened as she spoke, and admitted Elton; his usually calm, sarcastic countenance was overspread with lines of conflicting emotion; he started on seeing Sir Philip, and then his glance instantaneously turned to Mariam, and an old suspicion arose against him, seeing him there—the one he had spoken of to her, that the man was capable of driving his wife to error, to break his chains. But Mariam's calmness at once proved to Elton that she, at least, was innocent of the knowledge of Adair's departure, of which he had been that morning made aware by a letter from him, written an hour before his flight. But, "What did Sir Philip there? he could not be in ignorance."

And his grave suspicions made Elton's tone more than usually severe, as he saluted him; but a few minutes elapsed before the whole truth appeared before him. The elopement was still a mystery to all. How then break it? how act? At present, he felt nothing

but silence could be decided upon, and in a singularly monosyllabic temper for him, he sat listening and replying to all the conjectures about Kate's whereabouts, which made his position every moment more embarrassing on account of the being referred to by all parties, as one who ought to guess something nearer the truth than others had done. He was just preparing to go, and in absence ponder on the best thing to be done, when a servant brought in a letter for Mrs. Adair. One glance told Elton that it was not Richard's writing; and he had immediately risen to take leave when a scream burst from that lady, who had opened it, which cry electrified them all.

"It must be an invention—some vile scandal; he never could be guilty of such an act!" burst from her, as she frantically waved about the missive in her hands.

"She knows the truth," thought Elton; "so I will abide the issue;" and he laid down his hat again.

"How perfectly ridiculous you make yourself, madam!" said the dutiful Angelina, burning with curiosity.

"Read that infamy, Sir Philip," cried Mrs. Adair, handing him the letter. In vain Elton had endeavoured to attract her notice, and silence her; seeing Sir Philip's hand on the paper, he knew there would infallibly be an outbreak, so he quietly drew near the one most called upon to suffer from the affair, poor Mariam. Before he had released her hand, which he had taken with a kind,

affectionate pressure, a wild ejaculation burst from Sir Philip, which told all. In that moment, he forgot all he had once hoped on this very point, with regard to a future marriage with Mariam, had she loved him. He felt but the natural rage of a deceived husband, however much he deserved it, and checked the half-smothered cry of his conscience. Good-natured people often inflict as much real suffering as the badly intentioned. The letter was from Mr. Bruce, kindly breaking the dreadful news to Mrs. Adair, and at the same time pointing out all the horrid consequences of the deed. *In this world*, like too many others, he only dreamed of the present penalty. "She must prepare for the worst," he said; "for if not shot by Sir Philip, there would be fearful damages, for from all he heard it would be found, he feared, that ever since Lady Montgomery's marriage, Mr. Adair had deliberately been working upon her mind, against an excellent, worthy husband, to make her elope."

If a man cannot lean against a whitewashed wall without carrying away proof of his locality, neither can one live with a woman whose mouth is filled with evil speaking and scandal, without at last becoming tainted. Mr. Bruce was now sinking into the retailer of his wife's atrocities against every one, and when, like this, it happened to be mixed with truth, the remarks added to it, too generally made a bad affair more grievous still, as now; for the idea instilled into Sir Philip's mind, that ever since his marriage, even when he had

been all kindness, Kate was listening to and deliberately encouraging a lover, washed away every kinder thought, or compunctious visiting of his conscience, and with the words which burst from him, as he started up in mad amazement, of—

"My wife eloped with Mr. Adair! dishonoured, disgraced, a mockery for months!"

The bitterest revenge rose almost to suffocation in his heart, which was doubly increased by the secret, too despairingly displayed to leave a doubt of his sincerity, which Mariam's wild cry of agony betrayed. All the girl's feelings, hitherto controlled before those around her, that which so few had guessed, lay bare to every eye.

"Richard Adair gone! Merciful Heaven, have pity on me!"

Elton had foreseen this, and had drawn near to hide her emotion if possible, and now he supported her as she fell back, powerless to stand, in her chair. She did not faint, it was worse, for she distinctly heard every uttered word around her; she heard Elton's kind tones soothing, and imploring her, in a whisper, not to give her enemies this triumph; but of hope he could not breathe, he saw none. Angelina too drew near, and all that venom could invent was lavished upon her, and under that pure garb in which so many evil things masquerade religion.

"She should learn patience, and subdue her passionate, deceitful disposition, so offensive in the sight of

Heaven! for who had ever dreamed she loved Richard. She had behaved with so much duplicity, this was a just judgment upon her."

"Leave judgments to those who merit them, Angelina," said Elton, sternly; "nor dare to summon them here for this afflicted child; harbourless, they may recoil on yourself."

Mrs. Adair was wringing her hands, in streams of tears, and, all egotistical, only pitying herself.

Sir Philip stood speechless, double hate, double vengeance in his heart against Adair and his own unfortunate wife. Ideas fly with electric speed and effect through the brain in some extreme cases. His first moment's thought on the discovery of outraged rights was given to man's honour, cleansed in blood, retributive justice; then instantaneously succeeded a cool, deliberate revenge. An instinctive judgment of truth told him, and many things came crowding through his mind to confirm it, that Mariam could not so have loved Adair without a return; something beyond his power of guessing had separated, estranged them; but, as love and love beget reconciliation, so these two would have met, *might* meet, still. To prevent this should be his sole aim. He would let his wounded honour cicatrize of itself, and the Consistory Court should free him, free her, Kate; and then, Adair would have but one path an upright man could take—to the altar; and where then would Mariam's affection settle? This world is a strange one, of change, and ex-

change. Mrs. Adair's volatile thoughts had rushed off into a stream of turbulent pathos, and were tossing about without any thing like common sense to guide them. Pitching about like a ship in a storm, and her arms flung aloft like tottering masts, she was shrieking, "My boy—my murdered boy!—in a premature gory bed! Oh, who will give me my boy again!"

"Hush, my dear madam," said Sir Philip, with no forced smile, but one of perfect ease and calm, the quiet of a resolved man; "I do assure you, on my honour, your son has no bloodshed to fear from me! *He* has gone on the Continent, it seems; *I* shall not stir from town; I am no swordsman, a bad marksman. I grieve that our friendship, for appearance sake, must cease, but I shall bear it still in mind, believe me. Good bye, and trust in my words, I would not deceive you."

"Now, is he not a charming man!" exclaimed the weathercock-woman, as he closed the door behind him; "since Richard was tempted to do so mad a thing, what a blessing to have a man like Sir Philip! Another would have shot him, like an outlaw, without judge or jury;" and, while the placid hands wiped all traces of woe from her cheek with a laced handkerchief, an involuntary thought crossed her tranquillized mind—that simple embroidery was more in character with morning costume than Valenciennes lace, and so she should tell Mademoiselle Fanchette, her maid!

So much for worldly mothers' ideas of morality or

true sorrowing over a fallen sister!—Richard's act was the natural peccadillo of a young man, but Kate was a designing wretch!

Great Christians as we are, we cannot forget or forgive the first apple even to one another. Woman *always* is the more faulty, whatever her self-sacrifice may be; too often, one of *unselfish* affection, not vice, a distaste to give pain, by virtue's stern refusal.

CHAPTER XV.

FEW heavily laden things fly, except Time, and so the burden be gold, his wings richly gilded, how swift his course! he outpasses all hope, sometimes.

The Consistory Court put forth all her powers. Every snail was carefully brushed away with golden brooms, and proctors and lawyers flitted about with amazing velocity, to the eyes of those who have seen the poor in their antechambers, awaiting the termination of some tardy trial, which was to give bread, *just* bread, to starving mouths. We attack courts *generally*, not men individually.

Sir Philip's gold paved the pathway liberally to liberty, (as by the *law* ordained,) and vengeance. Kate and Adair abode their time with what patience they might. Here again he proved the generosity of his nature, wishing in all things to spare her feelings from further pain or outrage; he withdrew from all opposition. Thus, there was no tongue to speak of her wrongs, of extenuating circumstances, of a mother's insults and despair, nor of the last act of tyranny which drove her from her home—all was silence. In vain he was urged to do so, and thereby lessen the damages, which else would be ruinous to an already embarrassed man—no, he was deaf to all.

"Her name shall not be bandied about more than absolutely necessary," he said. "She has suffered enough, poor girl; let him release her quickly, and then I can make her the only amends in my power. I do not choose a perverted witness, some vile, paid menial, once cringing before her, to distort through their own narrow compass of vision, some of perhaps her best and purest acts and intentions, into deliberate vice and guilt; her act was one of the moment, ruinous 'tis true, but as far as such a one may be, excusable, and unvoidable."

So the divorce was pronounced in the ecclesiastical court; but all that Adair had done in kindness became a channel for insult and malignity; and while he stood aloof, with his hands clenched in agony and rage, his tongue was tied—he had declined opposition.

Sir Philip came forth, pitied by all, but the few who knew her provocation, admired by all for his loving-kindness, as by counsel displayed to the world's eye; and when riding high on the spirit of vengeance, he claimed the right of guardianship towards his son and heir, carried off by its vicious mother to wound and grieve him; ignorant justice, blinded to facts, empowered him to force it from her arms—those arms pressing it on the warm heart to which it was almost the last consolation; for she was just opening her eyes to the bitter fact, that Adair's affection was all gentleness, manly kindness, and the tenderest consideration for her feelings—but not love. He was not one to sigh because ruin stared him in the face, *that* would have bade him exert all his energies to avert it, all his cheerfulness to

soothe her; but now too frequently the almost groan burst from him, and the eyebrow, that most expressive feature in the face, when mobile, would rise high in the inward suffering the man struggled to conceal.

They had remained but a short time on the continent, and, as soon as Sir Philip's intentions were known, returned to await the result. Adair's motive in first quitting this country, had been to facilitate a hostile meeting, so difficult in England, should the other seek it; finding that not the case, they returned to town again. Had Kate been free from the tie her father was on her thoughts and fears, they would immediately again have quitted England; but though Bateman had been witness to Sir Philip's harshness, which had driven himself from the house, yet so little right judgment did he possess of the human heart, so little charitable pardon for its weakness, that he could find no possible excuse for his child; but we have before said, he was a thoroughly selfish man. His sufferings were mountains, another's mole-hills. However he might reprehend her frailty, a human, fatherly feeling ought to have made him see, and endeavour to withdraw her from her wrong path; but no, he would see neither, accept succour from neither, and her next bitterest pang after the certainty that Adair pitied, more than loved, was the knowledge that her fault had entailed penury on a parent, too proud to complain; he even quitted his lodging to avoid her visits, and quick retribution wrote on the very bread she ate—"Perhaps even a morsel like this your father wants!"

Worn by some fresh annoyance every day, Adair and Kate quitted town for Jersey, where they lived in the closest seclusion under a feigned name.

So much had she been wounded, and Adair himself excited by newspaper reports and paragraphs, that for a while he forbade the admission into their household of any English paper, and even his letters were received by himself at the post-office, that she might be spared the pain many of them would inevitably have given her. Thus, the world without was for him to war with, and as far as he might bring her peace, she enjoyed it.

It is a very certain fact, that the more dearly we purchase any thing the more we esteem it; and daily, hourly, the affection of Kate for her helpless child grew stronger. He had driven her to be what she was; like the feather from a seraph's wing falling in mire, her holy love had tarnished its purity in slough; but the more she felt Adair's want of passionate affection, the more closely she clung to her boy, he was so entirely her own, and, come what might, her heart whispered, "This is a love which can never fade!"

Death, even in her mind's eye, to that frail being, had ridden far away on his pale horse; it was impossible Heaven, ever merciful even to the most erring, could separate her from this. When we speak of Heaven's mercy, we too little reckon on its immensity of love, which, weaning us from all through unavoidable suffering and woes, calls us to everlasting rejoicing, which here we cannot know.

The outward world, we have said, was shut out from

their sight as much as possible. No paragraphs from newspapers disturbed them; she knew the divorce was hurrying to a sentence; all of law he perused, and merely told her that which was requisite for her to know; and thus a comparative peace settled around them, when she thought of the fearful past, of her husband's tyranny and injustice.

We left Mariam not even in a momentary state of forgetfulness, which would have been bliss to her, but seeing, hearing all; and oh! ten times worse, giving her imagination to the winds, which carried it in a whirlwind, whistling through the recesses of her heart, in every agonizing tone of memory.

A certain fear and respect for Elton, made Mrs. Adair submit often to acts and suggestions of his, when Angelina would have urged her to rebel against them; thus now, the latter was more than annoyed when she beheld him carry off Mariam, after soothing her to a show of resignation, accompanied by Leah, to Mrs. Wilton's, for thus Angelina lost a pleasant object, whereat to point her envenomed darts.

Mrs. Wilton had scarcely seen Mariam since her rupture with Sir Philip; she alone knew the reason, and her impatience knew no bounds, no excuse for this mad, as she deemed it, affection for Adair. With all her right judgment in most things, Mrs. Wilton had her prejudices, impossible to reason with or overcome; her strongest was the dislike to all the Adair family, and this she carried almost far enough to become indifferent

to Mariam, because she had not merely associated from the necessity of her position with them, but had fixed her affections on a member of the family. She even in justice argued with herself, that her feelings were unjust, that Mariam was forced to live in Eaton Square, and that the affections are involuntary,—despite all, she, woman of strong resolution, felt but blame for the desolate girl who had so naturally clung to the one who first espoused her cause, amidst the inimical tribe the fortune of war had made her prisoner to; for what else but a war between common-sense and madness, had ever made Lincoln cast his child away as he had done?

Elton soothed her with every argument he was master of; but what mere words could undo what had been done? He was not sparing either in animadverting on her own conduct.

"Now," he said, "you see that candour would have been better from the first, than this foolish concealment; I told you, you loved Richard, I also assured you that he returned it; now I tell you, it is fitting you should know it, it may guide you in other things, that this false delicacy and proud susceptibility have ruined him; reckless, he has rushed into the first pitfall before him, and Heaven knows how he will extricate himself; a good, noble-hearted fellow lost, and all for the sake of a foolish girl!"

"For pity's sake, have mercy!" cried she raising her head from Leah's bosom, and clasping her hands before her tearless, burning eyes. They were in Mrs. Adair's

carriage when this conversation took place, going to Mrs. Wilton's.

"It is right you should well learn this severe lesson," he continued in seeming harshness, though he sincerely felt for her; "it may teach you another time to be less susceptible, meeker, lowlier. Gracious powers be praised!" he ejaculated after a pause, "that I never made a fool of myself by loving any woman! They certainly are stumbling-blocks, hidden rocks to most of us, covered with seaweed, over which we slip at every step."

"You would not have had me own an affection for Richard, which his words taught me to believe would be laughed at; would you?" she asked.

"Laughed at? Did he not say, or almost say, he loved you?"

"Yes, he did," she uttered, scarcely audible, the memory of that lost time so shook her heart; "but I thought he was deceiving me!"

"Just so, vanity again! You only thought of those words, 'that little black girl;' and what if you were an Ethiop, so he loved you? the greater would have been your triumph over those who look only to the colour of the skin, and not that of the heart, and turn in disgust from the negro face, shudder at the touch of the negro hand; whereas, to a thinking mind, it might be argued, that they perhaps are nearer God than ourselves, since his bright sun has been sent down to caress them more fondly, and, while it cast its shadow over them, made the heart patient and humble; for none, when they *truly*

know their Creator, are more unobtrusively pious, more believing, than the African. But I am arguing a vain argument to one whose susceptibility alone has made her dark as night; but here we are, near Mrs. Wilton's. Mariam, if I seem harsh, it is that I have too sincere a regard for you, not to point out those faults which have given you much to reproach yourself for—you might have saved, you would not."

"May Heaven pardon me, Mr. Elton!" said the subdued girl; "I have been very selfish, very wilful, if I could save him now, at any sacrifice of pride, I would."

"Say *them*, Mariam; you have lost a poor sister. I may seem at times a heartless, cynical man; but the vanities and follies around me gall me to bitterness. From my soul I pity Lady Montgomery; her fate will be a bitter one, or I mistake much. Come," and he took her trembling hand, "nerve yourself, and let us hope that a better guide than we could be to them, may lead to a happier termination than I now foresee."

"I thank you,—oh! most sincerely—for all you have said, Mr. Elton," she whispered in deep affliction. "I shall learn, I trust, to be better than I am; and believe this, I would make *any* self-sacrifice now, to prevent what has occurred, even though he and I parted for ever."

"I believe you, Mariam. Well now subdue, conquer yourself; *this* is the hardest won victory of any; and remember I am your chosen permitted adviser. I may try my power some day, perhaps."

During this conversation Leah had sat perfectly

mute and motionless, except for the action of the eye, which turned from one to the other of the speakers; she seemed like one gathering every word or thought, which might serve for some hidden purpose, ever before her, and yet not perfectly matured in her mind. There is no body so immobile as the one whose mind is labouring over some hard track.

Elton declined entering Mrs. Wilton's, and Mariam, unsupported, had to bear all the unspared animadversions cast by that lady on Adair. As a true and practical Christian, she had only pity for Lady Montgomery; and, though the interview terminated eventually by a reconciliation between the aunt and niece, yet the true spirit was wanting; for if Mariam bore, with perfect patience and consciousness of deserving it, all her aunt uttered against herself, she could not even yet sufficiently blame Adair, to listen to the harsh and prejudiced terms lavished upon him, where she now felt that possibly *her* error had been parent to his guilt. To her generous heart, one only idea was predominant—to lead this poor erring woman, Adair's companion, back to right, though this might only be done by penitence, and that hard rough road travelled over *alone*. Separation—that was the barrier to all; we might repent, but part—this indeed is the disunion of soul and body; the latter is but earth—senseless earth, without energy, still less hope; but the immortal spirit dwells hovering still around its home, its companion bound in sin, and its sorrow, is regret; for two *never*

repent in unison—one mourns over the *lost past*, the other over the risked future.

Mrs. Wilton's own good thought of right, would have been, in an indifferent case, the same as Mariam's—separation—repentance—but, a fear marred it. Now, Adair must marry Lady Montgomery as soon as divorced; if not, she trembled at what the result might be, where busy tongues would in all probability inform him of that which till now he ignored—Mariam's attachment. Influenced by this dread, she repulsed with indignation the other's supplication, that she would seek an interview with Lady Montgomery, whose age made the step a more easy one than if she had been an older woman; and endeavour to make her understand, that, whatever her wrongs, the step she had taken was a devious one, leading only to despair. Once, this was just what Mrs. Wilton would have done; now, the proposition met with a cold sarcastic refusal, which called up the warm blush on Mariam's cheek, for a purer, more unselfish thought never guided any one than hers in making this prayer.

Almost in coldness the two parted; still, the visit and Elton's words had tranquillized Mariam; she knew she had suffering before her, and she returned home in some measure prepared, fortified, to bear it. We often make up our minds to suffering, but then something throws us out of the road we have journeyed over in mentally reckoning our amount of sorrows; and the unprepared spirit succumbs before an unforeseen

trouble. Poor Mariam knew not half she had to bear in payment of her own faults and impetuosity.

"Missy know where Madam Montgomery?" questioned Leah, after an almost silent drive homewards.

"No, Leah dear, I do not; not in London, I think."

"Tink im know, in Eaton Square?" she again inquired, after a thoughtful pause.

"Possibly they may—why do you ask, Leah?"

"Oh, for nuffin, Missy; curosity, nuffin more."

And the black, intelligent eye, fixed itself on Mariam's downcast face, with an indefinable expression, yet all affection.

CHAPTER XVI.

It would almost be impossible for an indifferent person to imagine what Mariam's mental grief was.—Almost without sympathy, among strangers, too frequently enduring insult, oppressed by the authority of a foolish weak woman, her guardian—a mere tool in Angelina's hands, who herself lost no opportunity of sarcastically alluding to young ladies casting their presumptuous affections away, where they were despised and rejected; and all this she bore without one rejoinder. Her silence, appearing like utter contempt to Angelina, doubly enraged her; whereas it was the almost conquered spirit submitting to all. If this conduct may seem to some unnatural, be it remembered how Elton had impressed on her mind, that her own susceptibility and impetuosity had, in the first instance, caused the delusion of dislike towards himself in Adair's mind, and all the subsequent sorrows. It is painful enough to know we have for ever lost the one we loved, but doubly so when we can only blame ourselves, and the perversity of our besetting sins, for that loss. Mariam's spirit and heart were alike bowed to the earth; for she felt, not alone for herself, but for him,

drawn as he had been into ruin; for in a letter he wrote to Elton, he said:—

"God knows, I should never have led this poor Kate astray premeditatedly; but when in her despair, fearing the separation from her child, she threw herself on my protection, what could I do? what can I do, but marry her as soon as the divorce shall be pronounced? and, as Mariam is indifferent to me, what have I to regret in the act?"

This letter Elton showed her, and, as he did so, narrowly watched the warring of those two enemies in her mind, Patience and Despair, whose lines were written on the suffering young face, struggling to conceal its clear page. There was but one to whom her heart lay perfectly open in all its affection and regret for Adair, and fearlessly she now spoke to her; for she was well assured this faithful creature, Leah, would, even in thought, respect him whom her mistress loved so truly.

"She will thank me some day, perhaps, for her suffering now," said Elton to himself. "Poor child! with all her troubles, where would she be were I not here to inculcate the only remedies—patience and forbearance? I see little chance of happiness; but Heaven is good, and may reserve some blessing our limited intellects cannot foresee."

Mrs. Adair closed her season in town while yet there were full assemblies of the gay; her appearance in any of these would have been not alone indelicate, considering her son's escapade, but most unpleasant to herself. Your dearest friends have a talent for making you hear

unpleasant home truths, the only ones you are frequently troubled with; for society too generally, sad to say, is enveloped in one large mantle of deceit and lies; its only point of unity, where every one is tearing his neighbour to pieces. Truth once lived, though in a well, out of which she popped occasionally in her cold, dripping, comfortless nakedness. The well has long since been dried up, and the hapless goddess with it, a mere heap of dust at the bottom, which blows away before the wind from the grasp of those who essay to hold the pulverized virtue. Home truths are some of this dust, blown on our household hearths, but so sadly mixed with ashes, that, when liberally distributed, they set the teeth on edge—an indigestible creation, turning father against child, friend against friend. Never producing the shining garments of peace, like poor Truth herself, but a two-edged sword, cutting all ties asunder.

To avoid these, Mrs. Adair quitted for the Grange, and, all things considered, our readers may imagine the family party was not the happiest in its composition and feelings, and there was nothing to relieve the monotony of its dulness, for even Narcissus was not there. By some extraordinary process of sudden mental light, he had become at last aware that Angelina might be won, if he so desired it; and so little did the desire, and the suspicion agree in pleasurable perspective, that he thought it better to keep away from her strength of mind, which awed his weakness, especially on this point.

Elton frequently joined the party, but, except to

Mariam, his visits were any thing but agreeable. Richard was now not only a stranger to their hearth, but almost to their lips, except when Angelina introduced it to grieve Mariam, or read some pleasant paragraph from the daily papers. Mrs. Adair had forbidden the name to be uttered before her; he had disgraced them all, ruined himself, and behaved like a villain to that excellent, exemplary man, Sir Philip Montgomery.

We will leave them all to their gloom and bitterness, and see how it fares with Adair and Kate. The former's professional adviser had written to tell him of Sir Philip's application for the guardianship of his son, at the same time giving it as his opinion, that at present the court would not accede to it, on account of the child's age. With the sanguineness of his nature, which had never permitted him to see the foreshadowing of evils, Adair shrugged his shoulders, and smiled at the other's petty system of revenge, and there the matter ended; he would not confide it to Kate—why give her an unnecessary pang, which even such a thought would be? It would have been better, as the event proved, had he done so.

We have said they were residing at Jersey, and frequently Adair strolled out alone, when domestic cares detained Kate at home—that home almost wretched alike to both; for with all his kind good-will to do otherwise, he could not cast off a gloom pervading every moment of his existence; it was not the remorse for the life he was leading—he, man of the world, felt little of

that—it was regret for her, regret for all she had relinquished, which the love he could give, never might repay.

One day he had wandered farther than usual, and when he returned, it was to find the unfortunate Kate in a state of insensibility, out of which she only awoke to rave in frenzy; her child was gone! She had been sitting in her own room, hushing the wayward cries of her son, on her bosom; the boy was not well, and she had remained at home to watch him. As she sate thus, her attendant entered and announced a gentleman, wishing to speak to her on business. She endeavoured to excuse herself on the plea that Mr. St. George (the name Adair had taken to spare her the impertinent stare of curiosity) was from home.

"Tell Mrs. St. George," said the man, "that it is something brooking no delay, and I am about to leave the island by the packet in half an hour, and it is necessary she should be made acquainted immediately with what I have to say."

Kate arose. She could not place the child in its bed; it had just sunk to momentary quiet on her breast; so, folding a shawl carefully around it, she descended to the sitting-room. Two men were there; it was perhaps the nervousness incidental to her position, possibly presentiment, but she shuddered and half drew back; then, too, the one who had advanced towards her had a peculiarly repulsive face to one capable of reading the human countenance—a low cunning smile, all servility and fraud, seemed fixed there, a snare to entrap the un-

wary. What good man could accept the task of tearing a child from its mother, who had sacrificed so much for it?

"Your business, sir?" she asked, without advancing beyond the door.

"May I request a few moments' quiet conversation, madam, on matters of moment?" was the question and rejoinder. The other man, one of coarser mould, but less ignoble manner, stood up.

"Could you not await Mr. St. George's return?" was her inquiry again. "I am unused to matters of business; indeed, I cannot understand in what I can act in any way without my husband."

"Lady Montgomery," fell from the man's lips, with his unalterably deceitful smile. Before he could add another word, she stepped back in a sudden terror towards the door, and so convulsive was her clasp, that the child gave a low sob; a look passed between the men, and the speaker advanced towards the receding and terrified Kate.

"Lady Montgomery," he resumed, "permit me to offer you a seat—you are alarmed; believe me, without cause. Our motive in coming is one to give you pleasure, I trust."

Kate had sunk on a chair, somewhat reassured, and her glances alternately fell on the speaker and her boy, as she endeavoured to still his low, pining cry.

"The fact is, Lady Montgomery, without entering further into circumstances which might pain you, Sir

Philip has keenly felt the aspersion cast on his paternal feelings, by the motives ascribed to your flight."

"The motives *ascribed,* sir," she said, some of her former dignity of manner rising at the insolence of a stranger's alluding to the past; "but," she added, rising proudly, "I do wrong in bandying words with you myself; Mr. Adair will enter in a few moments, he will reply to any thing you may have to say;"—she moved to go.

"Stop, Lady Montgomery," he said, quickly gliding, serpent-like, between her and the door.

"My business is amicable, but of necessity. I am a medical man"—he handed her a card, which she proudly waved back. "Despite all which has been most unhappily engendered in your mind by the deep grief, perhaps too rudely expressed by your husband about his unfortunate child, as heir to his title, he feels naturally anxious every possible thing should be essayed which might benefit him."

"Sir Philip think of my boy?" cried the incredulous woman.

"It would be deceiving you, madam, to say this interest arises from any thing but a personal repugnance to the idea of a deformed, helpless cripple inheriting his estates, where there exists a strong chance of cure."

"Cure!" she almost shrieked, her whole face lighting up with joy; "my boy be cured! see him walk, run, like another! Oh, sir! pardon me if I have been doubtful of the motive of your visit, but I saw only insult;

pray, explain your meaning," and, seating herself, she looked up in his base countenance in confiding hope.

"I must present myself then, Lady Montgomery, as a medical practitioner who has made all cases of deformity his sole ardent study. Sir Philip, hearing of me, consulted me. I was coming to Jersey, and though, having now but a few hours, I assured him that, on seeing the child, I could at once pronounce if a cure were possible."

"I trust it may be—I trust it may be!" she uttered, as with trembling hands she undid the frail infant's bandages, and displayed the shrunken withered limbs; one glance would have sufficed for all but a mother's hope, to carry quick conviction to the mind, that no earthly skill might ever bring them flesh or vigour.

It must be a demon in man's form who could see such a sight, and yet persist in his purpose. Kate's sweet face was bent with that love which none earthly can equal, on her child, whose little miniature countenance was the image of her own; and the two smiles crossed, speaking that angel tongue, known *only* to a mother and child.

"Positive, positive!" exclaimed he, after a careful examination; "I will stake my medical reputation that a prompt cure can be effected."

"Oh, if it may be!" uttered the woman in a tone of so much gratitude, that the voice was almost powerless to express all she felt.

"Of course you would like to retain the child yourself?" he asked.

"Oh, yes—yes! God knows I have suffered, sacrificed enough to do so!"

The last words were inaudible.

"I believe, too, this is Sir Philip's wish, I do assure your ladyship. I may be pardoned, I trust, for alluding to a painful subject, that only the kindest feelings exist on your husband's part towards you; though unfortunate circumstances have obliged him to take desperate steps."

"I am indeed glad to hear so, sir, I wish——" she stopped suddenly, and the wish was mentally completed—"that I had known this, been less impetuous, and now, not what I am!"

There was a dearer love in her heart than the one for Adair, and that she had brought shame upon.

The man hesitated—he seemed at a loss how to proceed; the other had not uttered a word, but he looked at Kate, and thought it was hard enough, through the necessity of his position, to do what he had to aid in, without the bitter deceit and fraud on his conscience, which the other, by his quick glances of exultation, seemed to delight in.

"You have, I presume, used some bandages or mechanism for your child?" asked the spokesman quickly, as if his momentary wit had at last been restored. "Could I see them? for this is a mere visit on which I shall report, and when I return next week, for no time must be lost, bring such as *I* employ."

"Yes, I have several; I tried every thing I could dream of," she answered. "I will send for them."

"I am much hurried," he replied, "for the steamer leaves almost immediately; if——"

She read his thought. "I will go myself, I know exactly where they are."

Adair and Kate were living with strict economy; she alone nursed and attended on her child. So full was her heart of hope for him, gratitude towards Sir Philip, that there was no room for suspicion. Advancing towards the sofa, she gently laid down her boy on a pillow, and with a caution to the supposed doctor to watch him, quitted the room. As she searched every where, something resembling a smothered cry reached her. She paused and listened, then the hall-door closed. "'Tis Richard," she thought, and, going to the staircase, gently called him: all was still. Some moments more elapsed in her search, and then she ran down-stairs into the parlour—it was empty. One instant was given to doubt—doubt of her waking, her sanity; and then fell the bolt on her heart, the reality which leads to madness—her child was gone!

CHAPTER XVII.

THERE is one crime in the world, to us incomprehensible—Infanticide. Still it exists, and is one of the commonest, most lightly punished. As some might read this in whom it probably would find extenuating circumstances, and as to such a mother's madness over her ravished child would seem dry, uninteresting details, we will lightly pass over Kate's awakening, and her inconsolable sorrow; moreover, we never could hope to paint a mother's despair, a mother's power of love, like that so beautifully and vividly portrayed in a recent popular work, where the bleeding feet cling to the rotten ice in the bounding flight, like a mountain-cat guarding her young. To those who have felt all the beauty of that gem of pathos, as we have, we leave the imagination to portray to them Kate in her madness; even on Adair she would not look, when he avowed a knowledge that Sir Philip had applied for his son's guardianship. Not all his assurance that he had concealed this from a kind motive towards her, could remove the impression that a motive of jealousy, arising from her great love for her child, had actuated him; thus making him a party to the base deed in thought, if not in act. There could not remain a doubt of where the boy had

been taken; for on the table lay a note from Sir Philip's solicitor, informing her of the judgment and sentence of the court relative to the guardianship. To remain in Jersey was impossible; indeed now, Adair resolved, if not too late, strenuously to oppose Sir Philip—deny their guilt, he could not. But he no longer would permit all her wrongs to be made so many crimes against herself; he felt, too late, that a mistaken kindness towards her had urged him to bear, forbear, and not vindicate.

Kate was no longer the woman we have hitherto seen her; all peace was gone—nothing remained but the desperation of regret. Her very nature seemed no more the same; a cold *hauteur* had taken place of that gentle lovingness we have hitherto seen, restless, wild, frantic, nothing appeared to touch or interest her; her father she never thought of; and if Adair, to call back her wandering spirit to reason and common-sense, spoke of him, an impatient gesture or word was the sole result.

All his efforts on their return to discover the abode of her child were unavailing, and, worn in spirit by the constant view of her agony, and the destruction of all hope around himself, he rushed on madly into the society of those ever ready to go hand in hand with a man gambling, and betting to destruction.

One day Kate sate rocking herself to and fro like a person almost childish from grief, and with every undulation of her body she recalled to her mind, that thus she had been wont to hush her boy to his gentle sleep.

A rap at the door of the apartment startled her, and at the same moment her servant entering announced, "A person, a woman of colour, wishing to speak to her."

"I can see no one—leave me," was the abrupt answer. The door closed, but a moment afterwards re-opened, and the girl again entered.

"If you please, my lady," she whispered, the person says she is Leah, Miss Lincoln's maid, and she has something to tell you, you will be pleased to hear; it is about your chil——"

The word was not pronounced when Kate was at the door, her wild excited countenance that of a maniac; the chord of existence was at play, and the almost sinking woman had started to life.

"Where is she?" she cried, "bring her to me—has she—has she——" the sentence died on her lips, as she supported herself from falling against the open door, and, though almost insensible, still the hand essayed to wave forward Leah, standing in the passage.

Supported by the two, she moved back to the room she had just quitted, and gradually the mist cleared away from before her sight and memory, and she grasped Leah's arm.

Over her thoughts, like a shield against deception in this woman, came the recollection of Mariam's kindness on more than one recent occasion, and she looked up with confidence on the messenger sent, as she supposed, by her. Over Leah's face passed so many emotions, that the mind vainly strove to distinctly trace one, the black eye, rolling in its ocean of white unquiet

waters, like a storm-driven vessel, bespoke so much at variance with good-will, that any one more lucid in her ideas than poor Kate, would have suspected and dreaded her. Whatever was in her mind on entering, as she leaned over Kate's pale, worn, young face, her own softened in its expression; a more human feeling seemed to pervade her senses, and the dogged, intense one of animal ferocity and revenge, gradually gave place to one of almost gentleness and pity, Kate looked so utterly helpless in her misery. We can with something of calm note the ravages of care in the old: all are born to suffer, and why then wonder if the common lot has found the pen of time to write it? But it is different when the young face has its heavy cloud cast over it—the mist which dims the eye, pales the thin cheek, and streaks the locks with premature white; this it is, which makes the heart ache; for we think and reckon the weary years which nature may destine that young form, to carry its load of more than mortal pain.

"Now, what have you to tell me?" whispered Lady Montgomery, scarcely above her weak breathing,—"speak quickly."

Leah looked at the attendant—"She leave the room," she answered, pointing to the servant, "and Leah tell all to Missy Mumgomery."

"Now!" cried Kate anxiously, when they were alone, endeavouring to rise from her chair, but the trembling limbs betrayed her, and she fell back.

"Missy berry weak," said Leah, placing an arm

around her, and yet it was done with hesitation; she had learned a sad lesson in Christian England, that many, and those boasting refinement of mind, shrink from contact with the skin darkened by the sun—a dark surface, over many a noble heart. Kate felt nothing of this defiling prejudice; and her aching, bewildered head leaned for support against the dark, heaving bosom. Over Leah's face passed something so refining, so pure, that the really plain visage became momentarily beautiful. In her strong, vigorous arms, she raised Kate's frail, shrunken figure from the chair, and, carrying her to the couch, laid her there, as if it were some poor infant, and then, still supporting her head with one arm, she sunk gradually on her knees beside her, and the eye was moistened with that tear of grateful admiration for another's generosity, which we should not shed even perhaps for personal wrongs.

"Listen, Missy Montgomery," she whispered, breathing quickly, with her mouth close to Kate's face; "listen well;—Leah berry bad woman, revengeful, cruel; Leah not know nuffin good but 'im lub for Missy Linkum; Leah see poor young missy day by day fret, fret, fret, and seem goin' for to die."

"But, my child—my child!" exclaimed Kate, impatiently endeavouring to rise.

"Stop!" said the other, gently restraining her, "'im come to dat, presently; de oder fust. Leah tell Missy Mumgomery sometink, and missy nebber must tell it again—she promise?"

Kate bowed her head, she had no force to speak; all her strength was in her power of listening about her child.

"Missy Linkum die for lub of Massa Adair; Leah see her fadin', fadin' away, like de lotus of her own big ribber in Ingy, when it drawn out of water, a little hour after; well, Leah swear to revenge it all on de one who done it, on——"

"Not on me!" uttered Kate in terror as she strove to rise. "Not on me, for what would become of my boy without me?" For a moment she forgot he was lost to her.

"Leah come for dat," continued the woman, still detaining her; "Leah know but one way of reaching Missy Mumgomery, through her child—Missy Linkum speak of all her lub for dat poor boy."

"God only knows all!" uttered the poor, broken-hearted mother.

Leah continued—"De boy stolen, Leah quiet, quiet, make all quieries ebery where; Sir Philip not neber suspec she, and den he like to hear of Missy Linkum; he tink missy marry 'im when 'im free, so Leah go to de house and talk, and keep 'im eyes open, and one day find out where de boy!" It would be impossible to render the dramatic nature of this Indian woman's tone and manner as she uttered this. The eyeballs distended and glowed like fire; for, as she spoke of it, she thought, for an instant *only*, of the revenge she had held at command the day she learnt this. Kate was speechless with ter-

ror as those eyes glared on her; she shrunk back, and sobbed hysterically in mere physical terror. Leah perceived the effect her manner had produced; it even quelled a mother's anxiety about her child. In an instant, by a self-command almost miraculous, Leah became calm, and whispering again, "Missy no fear now," she said, gently drawing Kate on her bosom; "Leah came here to tell all dis, but not as she now come—she came to be revenged, no matter how; but Leah not bad all, only people make her a reproach, cause Gor Amighty paint her blacker nor dey. She come, Missy Mumgomery not shrink away from her as oders do, all but dear Missy Linkum—Leah tank Missy Mumgomery for dat; den poor missy look so ill and changed, not de booful white creatur Leah first see, and so de black girl's black heart grow white—oh! all ober white—and she pity, pity Missy Mumgomery!" and in proof, one heavy tear, pure and clear as ever European Christian shed, dropped in mute evidence on Kate's hand. "And now she will ask Missy Mumgomery sometink; missy swear—swear by what she lubs best in dis world—to leave Massa Adair, to take de heaby sorrow off Missy Mariam's heart, and Leah bring back de boy!"

"I swear it!" shrieked Kate, springing, with the energy which hope will even bring the dying, to her feet, and, clasping her hands in attestation before heaven. "Give me back my boy, and I will leave all but him; give him to me, and I will pray for you at night, when there is no sound to intercept our cry to heaven, and

by day, when every thing beautiful in creation forces us to thank, and pray; give me back my boy!"

And the sobbing mother dropped on her knees at the feet of the woman, who seemed heaven-sent to her, and raised her streaming eyes to the other's face; and when the pale lips were unable from emotion to articulate, their quivering syllabled the words of earnest entreaty.

"Remember," said Leah, solemnly, as she raised and placed her on the sofa, "dat if missy break him word, berry bad tings will come to pass, and de boy be lost for eber to she!"

"I do repent me already of my fault—my impetuous fault!" ejaculated Kate, looking up to heaven, and more addressing the Spirit there than the kneeling woman before her; "and just Heaven knows it was fate, not vice, which made me commit it; and I did it, too, to save that which is lost me!"

"Not lost, missy, Leah promise; for she believe poor missy's word, dat de boy shall be in her arms before to-morrow night, and den Leah make two smile again, missy here, and poor dear Missy Linkum, whose heart berry sad now; but de boy must not stay here, else Sir Philip steal him again."

"I will fly with him—fly, Leah, my good Leah—where no law may part us, and——"

"Alone—mind!" interrupted the other, fixing her keen, searching glance on Kate's face; "for, if not, no place will conceal Missy Mumgomery from Leah!"

"Trust me—oh, trust me! Even were I not sick in my own heart of my fault, a superstitious fear would withhold me from again so erring."

Leah refused to enter into any particulars with Kate; but there was so much sincerity about her manner, that not a doubt crept into her listener's mind that she was speaking any thing but truth.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LATE on the following evening, when the mail-train from London arrived in Dover, from it descended Kate, closely enveloped in a large cloak, though the August evenings were still warm and seasonable: she was accompanied by Adair and an attendant. Without entering any hotel, they immediately proceeded on board the mail-packet, lying off, till the arrival of the train.

Scarcely a word passed her lips, but the eye wandered wildly towards every one approaching them, as though fearing some hand upon her arm, strong in might to detain her. Occasionally a sentence fell from her lips, trembling and whispered, of "Let us hasten, Richard," as though wind, tide, and train, all should obey the impatient spirit. At last they were under weigh, and Adair anxiously implored her to go below, and not brave the air, keen and chilly, at that hour, on the water; an impatient negative was all he could obtain from her; and there she sat, watching with straining eyes the receding cliffs, white in the dark night, afar off, and, when they could be no longer seen, the figure but changed its posture, and she watched through mist and spray for the land of her hope, that land which our impatience bounds to reach, and where already perchance

a grave is yawning to receive us. Every noise which seemed unusual on board that packet—the coiling of a rope, the hurried tread, a splash in the wave—made her start erect in terror, a terror which froze the pale cheek paler; she fancied it some boat bearing after them, a messenger in the law's name, to force her to restitution of the loving burden she held tightly clasped on her bosom.

"Kate, Kate—pray, be tranquil; there is nothing to fear, I assure you. Leah said it would not be missed in town for hours; you will betray yourself."

She made no reply, but sunk on her seat with a wild, haggard look.

Three hours passed, and then the town of Calais stood before them; their flight had been accomplished in safety, and, more dead than alive, Adair lifted her out of the steamer; and yet the heart beat stronger than the frail pulse, and tears of rejoicing rolled down her cheeks, as he, tenderly as a woman, drew her towards a fire which had been kindled to restore circulation to the blood, frozen more with terror than cold; and then, as the heavy cloak fell from her shoulders, her poor child, for which she had so much suffered and sacrificed, was exposed to view, and it was alone in seeing this frail creature, that all the purity and immensity of a mother's love might be fathomed—that ocean of love concealing so much riches, so many pure gems beneath turbulent waters, and racking storms. Not all her care continuously given, would long have preserved the life so faintly now whispering in its mould of clay; but, torn

as it had been from her, given to a hireling, who had not learned, in watching every breath, to comprehend the speech, yet incomprehensible save to a mother, and thus its many cries, many wants, had passed unnoticed, until, wanting these, life had expended itself in plaints, to still which she would have passed nights in watchfulness. Poor boy! he could but, pining, tell her there was one nearer than herself, to him—Death; for she but held his frail body, and the other had grasped his heart, which not even her warm love could quicken to life. But there are things we will not see for those we love—death is one.

Leah, as we have shewn, spoke truly; until she beheld Kate's misery but two feelings pervaded her heart—love towards her mistress, Mariam; and from that sprung the other—a resolution by any means to revenge her sufferings on Kate. We do not in any way attempt to excuse this most fearful, most entrancing passion—but we *do* excuse the woman, for she was a child of nature, and our mere human nature is but animal, after all; and, as the dog will fly at the throat of those who wound him, so will an unchecked nature, seek revenge. For this gift of humanity at our birth, demands two things—to have the evil overcome, like the crackling thorns we cast into the fire, and the good seed cultivated, until it becomes a flourishing tree, in the branches of which bright generous thoughts, like rejoicing birds, come to rest.

Leah has told how she obtained a footing at Sir Philip's, one most gladly awarded her. She had thrown

herself in his way, and he, ever anxious to gain all information relative to Mariam, the sole object of his thought, and future hopes when free, fell into the snare; and while she wandered about the house in town, an object of mockery and surprise, looked upon as a half-witted creature by the menial gang generally infesting rich men's houses, she was, with the proverbial cunning of the native Indian generally, of low caste, serpent-like, making her way hidden, and in silence. Her first intention was, through the lost child, to secure a certain revenge on Kate, and free Richard. The means she had not all digested, they were but crudely imagined, but happily a better spirit awoke within her, and she repented, before the deed was done. Truly it is so, that there are spirits ever about us, good and evil, and this of mortality they bow to, not for ever to be waking.

Oh! if we could but reason thus, and when assailed by some demon keep him at bay till our guardian spirit rose strong from its slumbers, how much, much sorrow should we spare ourselves and others!

For what is more wakeful, alas! than sin? ever on the alert in dreams, in thoughts. The haunting nightmare of that rest we court to avoid temptation; coming stealthily on, no hasty, ungentle step to alarm us, but moving forward smiling; a mirror in the extended hand, in which we see the far away hills of pleasantness and peace. We grasp the extended hand, the mirror reverses, and beyond we but see despair and desolation! The once winning smile becomes worn and haggard; the hills indeed are there, but rugged and

barren, and up these we must toil in penitence and woe, whilst over their summit are fleeing all our happy innocent thoughts and dreams, which we vainly raise up our voices to call back to their forsaken home—our breast.

Leah had obtained permission from Mariam to absent herself from the Grange, and return to town on a pretended excuse, which seemed plausible to the other; and thus, without exciting a suspicion of herself, the wily woman discovered where Lady Montgomery's unfortunate child was, and, without herself appearing in it, had it carried off from the farm-house, some distance from town, whither Sir Philip had placed it at nurse. Her good spirit had indeed stood by her during her interview with Kate, and when she placed the restored child in its mother's arms, she could not exact the first demand, "that Kate should go *alone;*" she relied o the promise given, that they should part, and, satisfied in her own strength to do all ill if Kate deceived her, she quitted with the consolation of heart we all feel, when led from a bad, to a worthy action.

* * * * * * *

"Heaven knows, Kate, I would not keep you longer in error could I avoid it," said Adair, the day following their arrival in Calais, as he urged her to place a greater distance than they already had done between Sir Philip and her sole thought, the boy. "But though he cannot, I hope, here, call in the law to force the child from you, still, it would be well to leave nothing

undone, the omission of which might afterwards be a reproach to us."

"Hear me, Richard," she said, looking up from the sickly burden on her knee, but though sadly, with a calm, resolute voice, "it will seem as a mockery to you that *I* should speak of virtue, or the yearning regret for that which will never be mine again—peace of mind; that peace which made all my toil and poverty once, things to forget on my pillow at night, and to rise with a garment of hope on the morrow; so I will say nothing of this myself but as a superstitious fear. We must part!"

"Part, Kate! and in Heaven's name what will become of you?"

What a dull thing reality is, and especially when allied to error! The childish words of innocence become silliness, the pet names of warranted affection, mockeries or *oubliettes*; Adair never called her Katty now.

"I can exert myself, as I once used to do for my father; and oh, doubly so now! for this poor, weakly child is more to me than ever he was. And then you know Sir Philip cannot in law cast me penniless on the world: for myself, I would reject with scorn any thing from him; but we forget self and pride—all for the sake of those we love."

"But Kate—dear Kate—I cannot forsake you; have I not brought you to shame, and were it not a greater one there to leave you?"

"You allude to marriage? Hear me, dear Richard—

dear, ever dear—too much so for me to condemn you to unhappiness: *you do not love me*, not as you should love, to make all sacrifice seem light; I *never* shall become your wife, and do not seek to know all my reasons, for they are sacred by a promise given, but we must part."

Man is a wilful animal, liking ever to do of his own accord, never to be coerced. Kate had truly judged the extent of his affection, but, as a friend or brother, he had been looking forward to his marriage with her as to an event the most painfully hopeless to himself; and yet one to which he was in honour bound, even though positively not having urged, or wished her to take the step which ruined both. Yet, with all these feelings, he felt beyond expression surprised and wounded to think that she *could* leave him. Oh, man! and oh! our self-esteem.

"I will tell you thus far, Richard," she continued, in reply to his exclamation of grief and surprise that she should dream of separation, now that a short time would cement their affection by a stronger and legal bond; "I am bound in gratitude to leave you, and equally bound not to reveal beyond this; and, far more than even this, I have a purer, better reason. In my impetuous flight to save my boy, I overlooked the fearful stain in which I was imbruing him; I may never efface it, but deeper, darker, it shall not be made by me. No tie of marriage can obliterate it—separation, reparation, as far as possible, may. I never till now learned what virtue truly was; God help and pardon my sin of ignorance;

and yet I sometimes find comfort in thinking, that had I not sinned, and so deeply repented, I should still be ignorant of Heaven's immense mercy towards repentance, and the rejoicing over us of its glorious band of spirits!"

That day they parted homes; all she would consent to receive, was, the smallest sum possible to support herself and her suffering, dying child; and, so self-deceiving is the human heart, that perhaps one of Richard's severest trials was, to lose the support this girl's love was to him, in the now alienation from all. Yet it was kindly done, and if at that moment he had been capable of judging such faults as the one he had committed, rightly, and not with the eyes of the man of the world, who does not even reckon them venial, her resolute withdrawal from sin, her patient acceptance of any suffering which might be awarded in payment of it, would have been the only perfect and straight road to his heart's conviction of error, that could have been found.

One good practical lesson is worth all the sermons ever preached; it is a mental cat-o'-nine tails which cuts into the heart, leaving its zebra marks behind it.

Nothing, however, could persuade him to leave her alone in her sorrowful watchings over a flickering life.

Day by day the lamp grew fainter, more dim, as the heart's blood paled to water, thus insensibly unmarked to ripple forth. Still she would not see it thus; and the little voice, now too thin to reach her ear almost in the low pining cry, its answering reply

to death's "Come away," was joyfully noted by her, as proof that his sufferings were less, and the mother's eye brightened while reason looked on and sighed over her blindness. But there came a day when the thin voice ceased, the hands no longer essayed to clasp her neck, and those eyes of more than infant sense—for they had borrowed their expression from her intense gaze and love—were fixed upwards still on her face, but there was a glare as of glass over them.

Richard had sat beside her for hours soothing, comforting, speaking reason, where it found no heart to comprehend it, for it fell with a dull, death-like sound on a mother's ear; it was the "dust to dust," on a beloved one's coffin. He saw the glare in those strained eyes, and, gently pressing down their lids, he shut them from her gaze for ever. A shudder passed through her frame, then a shivering cry, and as he gently endeavoured to take the dead child from her arms, she shrieked in wild excitement, and sprang with her cold burden to the farther end of the apartment, where the weeping voice found words to pray and supplicate, as if he represented to her mind both, the One to give, the other to take life—grim death.

Let moralists preach *stern* duty; there is as exacting and just a one in comforting the weak and erring woman, and shielding her from despair's possible consequences, as in withdrawing from all contact with her. He felt nothing of this; but when her senses returned, and her bowed, breaking spirit owned the just retribu-

tion, still she could not drive him from her,—parted they were in sin, but in her sorrow he more than shared it, nor sought to lead her back to the fault even he began to look upon with awe, as having had Heaven's hand in judgment raised against it; for that which made her err, was taken from her.

CHAPTER XIX.

We have shown how Leah, unsuspected, obtained possession of Sir Philip's child; to accomplish this, and obtain an entry into his town residence, it needed deep cunning, much plotting. When we commence such things, we do not always calculate or remember, that not an act of ours will fail to be weighed in a balance for good or ill, reckoning for or against us; neither can we always foresee, that what is necessary for one scheme, may militate against another one dear to us. To obtain Sir Philip's confidence it needed an excuse, and not foreseeing any annoyance to her mistress, whom she would have died to serve, she let fall oblique hints of regret, possibly not unshared by Mariam, for the past. This made her sought for by him, to whom she had presented herself on a trivial, but plausible excuse, and, in consequence of the train she lighted, the theft of his son passed almost unnoticed in the absorbing anxiety to have his divorce passed as quickly as possible; and just before the dogs and Mantons were starting for the north for grouse-shooting, Sir Philip Montgomery's divorce passed the House, and he almost immediately quitted town to visit an old friend residing near the Grange. Much seemed to favour his project. Adair

was of necessity absent, and the heavy damages awarded Sir Philip made his return seem impossible; but to all, his marriage with Lady Montgomery was looked upon as an act, if not accomplished, beyond a doubt of early occurrence. Poor Adair! though much to blame, surely no man had been more completely thrown into unsought error and difficulties than he had; for his unfortunate argument to Kate in favour of wrong, uttered in thoughtlessness, not premeditated guilt, did not deserve the punishment which had fallen upon him; for how have cast from him one so wretched, so unprotected as Kate, when she appealed to him?

It never entered for an instant into Mariam's mind, so innately delicate, that any sister woman could, under the circumstances of the affection she was known to possess for Adair, for a moment harbour the idea of uniting her to Sir Philip now. Great then was her horror when, one day after a round of country visits, Mrs. Adair and Angelina both for once agreed that there was no possible reason why the much-injured husband of Kate Bateman should be excluded from their house. They had met him at a neighbour's, and, as they constantly would be of necessity doing so in town, it would be absurdly prudish, *arrièrèe*, countrified, to cut him; and so it was settled in all *delicacy*, that the only one worthy of so sharp a proceeding was Richard Adair, for he had disgraced them. Consequently, Sir Philip gained his object; and, while all believed his ex-wife now espoused to another, he was once again following an *ignis fatuus* in Mariam, whose very soul revolted

against him in utter disgust, which she took no care to conceal. And none suffered more keenly in all this than poor Leah, believing, as she did, that Kate had so bitterly deceived her, and, as the wife of Adair, had flung all promises, however solemnly given, to the winds. The papers duly announced the death of Sir Philip's son, and the doubly-rejoicing father put on mourning, and the gladdened countenance spoke the relief this death was to him; two passions were gratified at once—this object of his hatred and reproach was removed, and he alone knew truly, how keen the avenging blow would fall on the wretched, bereft mother.

Whilst meetings with Sir Philip were only the result of visitings at neighbours' houses, Mariam resolved to avoid them by not quitting home, and this was the commencement of her country annoyances—she who had hoped for peace there. But she had an indefatigable enemy ever watching to wound her, Angelina; and poor, weak Mrs. Adair, led as she ever was, fell readily into the snare both were preparing before her (Sir Philip and Angelina), and, to Mariam's horror, she one day saw him enter the drawing-room at the Grange, on those terms of friendship which fashion might permit, but delicacy, under existing circumstances, forbade. In an instant all this man had dared to insinuate to her, one night before Kate's elopement, rushed to her mind, and her true woman's heart bled anew for the poor creature, even though her own rival, who had assuredly been driven to the step she had taken, and possibly for the object which now made him a visiter at the Grange,

As he entered, Mariam rose hastily, with that innate dignity of a fine mind insulted by contact with depravity, scarcely returning his bow, and, perfectly blind to the proffered hand, quitted the room. Sir Philip bit his lip; but he had done too much not to suffer more, sooner than now retire without a hard struggle to win. He knew women in general are strange animals, and that their actions should never be decidedly reckoned upon as indexes of their intentions. A true woman is a mental reservation incarnate, not positively untruthful, but composed of many biases which require careful stitching and patching together, like our grandmother's quilts, to make a good, comfortable, compact whole. But Mariam was truth itself—unpolished, undisguised truth—too candid to take one crooked path for the attainment of any thing; moreover, the once shy, strange girl, the timid gazelle, brought from its Indian wilds, was beginning to look around, and care for its own safety. A warm debate followed this proceeding of hers, in quitting the room, to which she listened with a calm decision of manner, beyond measure galling to the mover of every thing against her, Angelina, who could scarcely restrain her envy within decent bounds; to see this girl, whom she had sought every way of humbling, coolly rejecting him, whom she, Miss Adair, would gladly have accepted; perhaps, the bitterest of all had been Mariam's rejection of Narcissus Browne, for it had required long arguments with herself to gain her own consent to what, even with her evangelical dispositions, she regarded as a *mésalliance*.

Seeing Mariam's dislike to marriage, even knowing it now to arise from affection for her own brother, she urged her weak mother to enforce the clause of the will, obliging the girl to choose a husband, or forfeit her property, by a certain time, of which there remained little now. We have seen that even with Narcissus she would have promoted the marriage, grieving her own heart to wound another. Oh! there is nothing so active and unsleeping as one woman's jealousy of another! They dream new-born babes of revenge at night, and nurse and cherish them all day. Mariam resolutely, positively refused to remain *en partie de famille* with Sir Philip, where all his obnoxious attentions were directed towards herself, and where no rebuff of hers could in any way repulse them.

Seeing she sought her room whenever he called, Angelina invented another plan whereby he might become a visiter *in* the house, and thus drive her from her retreat. She made her mother invite Mr. and Mrs. Bruce from town, and Narcissus, thus making Sir Philip's residence not to be remarked among others—quite blinding her poor milk-and-water mother to the gross indelicacy of his residence among them, on any excuse. His visit having terminated in the neighbourhood, he removed most gladly to the Grange; and then came the Bruces and Narcissus.

Still Angelina bit her lip, for Mariam, with perfect composure, took her place in the drawing-room, and as completely ignored Sir Philip's presence by deafness

whenever he addressed her, as if he had not existed: her conduct was a reproach to both her guardian and Angelina, and so severe a one, that it was as a drawn battle between them. It was only in her chamber that the poor, tired heart gave way—not in impatience; she had gained immortality's greatest victory over her mortal nature. Not an impatient, complaining word fell from her—she wept and suffered in almost silence; and the dark, agonized face of Leah leaned over her, working in its own regret for vengeance, delayed through pity then, where she *now* could not command it, as none knew where Adair and Kate were, and these she felt were the authors of Mariam's deep affliction. When words of wrath burst from her, "Hush!" Mariam would say, though almost choking with those tears nature sent involuntarily forth, "Let us be patient, Leah, and hopeful, for we are but fools when we strive to work against a wiser power. Forgive me, oh, my God! but I am weak and frail, whilst I strive to guide others, and my very tears are witnesses against me in my unwillingness to bear the lot awarded me. I will hope, knowing that every thing is for the best."

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Our *dear* friends—Mr. and Mrs. Bruce—sate alone in the deserted breakfast-parlour, a few days after their arrival at the Grange; they looked very snug, for we have forewarned our readers, by many hints, that he was no longer the disagreeable person in his wife's

eyes that he once was; in honour to the sex we must say, that a woman *resolved to do*, in nine cases out of ten, succeeds.

Mrs. Bruce had made her husband quite an agreeable companion; she had withdrawn him from the society of such fellows as Elton, who ruin a man for any thing docile, putting all sorts of ridiculous notions of the dignity of man in his head, as incompatible with tale-bearing and scandal. Bruce now, though he sometimes peeped through his old mirror, and saw ancient thoughts and ancient impressions of things, soon found it snatched away by his *certainly* better half—she was a good three-quarters of him—and in the part she self-appropriated, a good lump of his heart had passed.

One only principle of primitiveness which he retained was, that he was the most *literal* man in the world.

"I declare, Bruce," whispered she, drawing her chair close to his, "I am perfectly disgusted with the indelicacy of all the proceedings here! Could any thing be more so, than inviting *that* Sir Philip? I declare I feel quite compromised by remaining here!"

"So I have been reflecting, my love," said the pensive man, reckoning the flowers in a square of carpet; "let us go away again."

"Go away!" she exclaimed in surprise. "You really *are* very stupid, Bruce, and devoid of generous feeling, in many cases! What, would you have me desert poor, dear Mrs. Adair, whom I have known so many years? leave her unguided among so many ene-

mies? No, Bruce, I see you are not yet acquainted with the generous devotion of your wife. From my heart's inmost core I pity her; it is others I blame—that Angelina, and that vile, obstinate Miss Lincoln. Why cannot she marry Mr. Browne? if she had any delicacy she would marry any one, sooner than let every one see she's dying about young Adair."

"I wonder where they are," suggested he.

"I wish, my dear," she responded, tartly, "you would leave off that habit you have of *wondering* about every thing. I'm sure *I* wonder at nothing, and you never answer any suggestion of mine, but rush off *wondering* directly."

"I didn't mean any harm, lovee," said the penitent man; "I thought my remark quite relevant to your subject."

"By the way," exclaimed the consistent woman, "I should not wonder if, as a climax to their indelicate conduct, young Adair and the ex-Lady Montgomery were to come; of course they are married by this!"

"You say 'they,' my dear," responded the literal one; "I thought you excluded Mrs. Adair from more than weak leading."

"Well, I said 'they,'—I meant Angelina; and bless me, Bruce, how very stupid you are!"

"Poor little Kate" fell from the impervious man, taking a peep through langsyne's glass, "I should like to see her again, and happy too; she never was with Sir Philip; I hate that cold-blooded man!"

It is impossible to say where the hot blood, which

rushed to his wife's face, might have boiled over, had not the door opened, and Mariam slid in; she stopped suddenly, having crept for quiet hither, believing all in another apartment.

"My dearest Miss Lincoln," cried Mrs. Bruce, rising hastily, and seizing her hand, as she drew her to an unwilling seat, "I am delighted to see you a moment alone; forgive my abruptly speaking on a subject near my heart. I have seen with deep pain, that—surrounded as you are by enemies, and those who, to their shame be it said, instead of guarding, persecute you—you fear all, even me, who would do any thing to alleviate your early sorrows, my poor child." As she uttered this motherly phrase, Mrs. Bruce pressed the hand, still retained a prisoner in her own. Mariam said nothing, but, as Byron wrote, she fixed her open eyes on the sentimental speaker in discreet surprise, for she well read the other's character.

Bruce himself was speechless, and staring.

"Poor child!" continued his wife, "listen to me. I know your thorough good, strong sense will teach you discretion and secresy; were I you, I would appeal to a justice you will never meet here, and let the laws of England, so gloriously unprejudiced and just in all cases, decide between a foolish father's will, and——"

"Hush! madam," interrupted Mariam, coldly withdrawing her hand and rising; "I can permit no one to question my dear father's right to do with me as seemed best to his view. If you please, we will drop the subject; I came here seeking some one, pardon my

interrupting your *tête-à-tête.*" Before another word could be spoken, she quitted the room.

"I always told you what that girl was!" cried the furious woman; "so much for being good-natured, and trying to serve any one!"

"I never shall understand you, my dear," uttered the disheartened husband; "I really thought you disliked and blamed Miss Lincoln!" Any retort was prevented by the entrance of Mrs. Adair and Angelina, and the worthy quartette sat down, and began hatching as much mischief as possible,—for what the malice of some left undone, the weakness of others perfected. Long were family matters discussed in this friendly circle; and Mrs. Adair finally decided, by their united persuasions and advice, to insist upon Mariam's immediate acceptance of some one, as the only means of restoring the house to that quiet state it knew before she became its inmate. They were in warm debate when a step sounded in the hall, a servant flung open the door, and the last man on earth they any of them wished to see, namely Elton, entered!

CHAPTER XX.

"How d'ye do—how d'ye do?" he said, bowing and shaking hands with all. "'Unity is force;' I am delighted to see and hear of so many good friends collected here at the old place. The Grange is becoming a perfect password for hospitality; I heard of you all in town, and felt that possibly my presence might be required to complete your contentment." A good-natured smile played over his features as he said this, and he accompanied it with a quiet rubbing of the hands as he glanced from one discontented face to another; for no man on earth could by possibility have been more unwelcome any where, than Elton just now, at the Grange; and yet all were for politic reasons more or less civil; even Angelina dreaded to a certain extent drawing down on herself his quiet sarcasm; nevertheless she was the first to recover speech.

"It is certainly strange," she said, "that we, who came down here for a little quiet retirement after the recent most painful event in our family, should be made the subject of conversation. Pray, by whom was Mr. Elton informed, may I ask, of our doings at the Grange?"

"My dear Angelina," he answered deprecatingly, "why ask so absurd a question? Ought you not to know, that when you have drawn after you to these wilds, that cynosure of eyes, Narcissus Browne, the whole arena of wild young ladies in town would be raging against you? He is here, is he not?"

"Of course he is," said Bruce slily. "Ah, ah! Miss Adair, I told you what the world would say!"

Mrs. Bruce laughed significantly too, for she knew how galling this supposition must be to her dear friend Angelina, rejected in all her overtures by him, as she so visibly was, daily and hourly; though done in all innocence, by the scarcely conscious man.

"And he is not the only attendant knight here," continued Bruce, delighted for once, in pleasing his wife,—"Sir Philip Montgomery is here,—what do you say to that, Elton?"

"Say!" exclaimed the other, affecting a look of incredulity perfectly natural, "that I don't believe *that*, old boy; I know our good hostess here to have a kind heart, and a forgiving one too, but hang it all! Sir Philip Montgomery never could be an invited guest in the house of Richard Adair's mother."

"May we ask why, Mr. Elton?" hastily inquired Angelina, before her mother could reply.

"Because—does it need an explanation to any delicate mind?—poor Dick may have been wild, foolish in many things; but knowing as *I* do, as you all do, how that unfortunate creature was cast, rather cast herself and child, from a husband's tyranny, on his protection, by

Heavens he would have been a cold-blooded wretch to have drawn aside! I only blame him for one thing—not immediately bringing her to his mother's home, and making an appeal to the bosom from which he drew his own life, whether she should cast a mother, so shielding her child, upon the world; but young blood sees one side only in a generous act—self-sacrifice, never prudence. I, perhaps, better than another, know how severe Dick's sacrifice has been—no, no, Angelina, Sir Philip never——"

Before he could complete the sentence, the door opened, and the man in question walked in. Elton knew he was at the Grange—he knew Mariam's probable persecutions so surrounded, and these facts brought him down; but he did not know his own heart yet, and how ill he could, under some circumstances, control it. Speaking of poor Kate had brought the once blithesome girl so vividly before his mind's eye, in bitter comparison with her present heart-broken state, bereft of what she had loved so well—stricken with sorrow and self-accusation as her son's murderess, when her own act gave Sir Philip the strong arm of law to take him from her care,—for all this too he knew, and knowing it, as her husband entered perfectly at ease and at home, Elton started up, and snatching his hat, brushed hastily past him, as if his very presence made the atmosphere infection. There are some persons we feel bound to respect, however we may dislike them. Elton was one of these; and as Sir Philip's eye fell on the other's cheek, flushed by a red patch of generous

blood, and saw the sternly fixed eye, full of honest disgust, turn from his own, his heart felt livid, as if its stream ran white with shame, and the forced smile was an ill masked grimace of cowed pride.

Elton, with almost the agility of a young man, hastily ran down the steps from the hall door to the grounds, and walked on gesticulating and talking aloud to himself, until he reached a distant part of the lawn, hidden from view of the house, and here he paused. The day was warm for an English September, yet not sufficiently so to warrant the vigorous use of his handkerchief over the heated brow, as he took off his hat to cool it in the breeze; as he did so, he looked around, and there, beneath the very tree where Kate and Richard had so often sat and read together, was seated another—Mariam. Yet all unconscious of the thoughts, the locality had awakened in one to whom Kate had pointed it out, with a sigh of regret for those happy days, Elton stood awhile watching her pensive, altered face. He sighed, an immense proof of feeling in him, the most matter-of-fact man in existence; for he saw again the other two there in imagination, and, remembering all he had foreseen, foretold to Mrs. Adair, he exclaimed half aloud, gazing on Mariam—"She had her own way with them, and let her reckon their ruin above, as best she may; but she shall have nothing to repent of here, if Dick Elton can help it!" and so saying, he advanced towards Mariam. The crisped leaves crackled beneath his feet; she turned hastily round, with a look of fear on the face once so proud, which made his heart ache; it made the

orphan girl seem so much an orphan to all happiness. When she recognized him through the mental mist which had painted another, a glad cry burst from her, and perhaps, but one other in the world, might have had two hands so warmly placed in his, by a consenting heart, though cold usage might have outwardly stayed them, as those clasping Elton's.

"So," he said, "Mariam, you are really glad to see the old fellow here, are you?" and he seated himself on the rustic bench beside her, still holding her hand, which lay confidingly quiet.

"Very, very glad, dear Mr. Elton; for you are the only one in whom I can place any confidence—even my aunt has almost deserted me."

"Well, I'm sorry for that; she's a good woman as women go in general, but she has her fancies too. I dare say some day you will be better friends than ever. Let the wheel go round with the stream; we shall have good wholesome meal from its working at last. There's no use hurrying it; it would only trouble the machinery, and delay, not expedite."

"Those, dear Mr. Elton, *can* wait where they know there is good corn in the mill, to carry out your metaphor; but when all is chaff, what hope is there?"

"For chaff, read Angelina's prompting envy; Mrs. Adair's weakness; the folly of another, and—and—Sir Philip."

"Oh! pray don't speak of him jestingly, even though reprehensively; that man is too much an object of horror to me to be lightly spoken of."

"And they want you to marry him, do they not?"

"All—all! and he—oh! save me from him, Mr. Elton—you cannot imagine the disgust he inspires me with."

"And me too, Mariam; I am glad we agree in that point, as in another—in all, I hope. I mean, you ask me to save you; I knew he was here; I came to do so, if *you will*,"—he looked fixedly on her as he spoke.

Mariam met his eye unflinchingly; she felt no fear of him. "I will now, as I before promised," she said, "take your advice in all things."

"Humph!" was the thoughtful answer.

"Do you know," he continued, after a short pause, "that Dick has married Kate?"

"I presume so," fell from the quivering lip, which grew paler at each word. He asked a question only, which she read as an assertion of facts, long such in her imagination.

"You also know, Mariam, my child, that you must choose a husband soon, don't you?"

"I will forfeit all, and starve sooner than marry any they have selected for me, or any that I have met!"

"All very pretty in theory," he replied, with a shade of his usual sarcasm.

"Starvation, persecution, dying for love, are all charmingly pathetic, or romantic; but sit a week in a cold, comfortless room, on a snowy winter's night, *sans* fire, *sans* food, *sans* clothing or bed, and the very unsentimental cries of 'potatoes all hot,' or 'mutton pies,' will become far more melodious than the finest strain Sontag ever sang! Let us come down to earth, Mariam,

out of the clouds, down too from your garret of pathetic starvation, and talk vulgar, common sense. Don't stare; I have come with a husband in my pocket for you."

"Marry!" she cried. "Marry! oh no!"

"Of course, not just at present; but let me show you the advantages of matrimony, fortune, and peace of mind, with an honourable man. First, a protector, and all your present persecutors driven back discomfited. Next, your heart is good and kind—riches well applied, are Heaven's best gifts; for we become its agents, and every little good act of ours brings us in immediate communication with our principals—peace of mind of necessity follows; for our loneliness is at an end, we have constant occupation—then these same principals approving us as agents, we rise to become their friends; and some day we shall receive an invitation to visit them in their palaces of wealth." As he spoke, the whole man seemed changed, the voice, the countenance—all; a placid smile played over the face, often so sarcastic, and Mariam's fixed gaze borrowed serenity from his as she looked up.

"I will be guided by you in all," she said in a low whisper, "if I can command my rebellious heart; for you are a good man, and could not guide ill."

"Then promise to be my wife the day I claim you," he said, taking her hand; but it was as a father's, not lover's clasp. "I am not young, but I will guide, guard, and protect you."

"But—but—" she uttered through her struggling tears, almost overwhelmed by this most unexpected

proposal; "you know how I loved—still love Richard. I should often think of him, and——"

"Regret, Mariam?—well, it would be natural; I should expect it; and believe this, if I see a cloud on your brow, I *never* will question, but comfort and cheer you, till I chase it away. Besides, I will not ask you to fix the day of our marriage until you yourself think fit to do so. Give me a right to protect you, and, proclaiming that right, drive back the importunate swarm about you. I am an old man; but, whatever others may say or think, *you* shall never call me an old fool; try me—an engagement is not marriage."

Mariam's spirit must have been nearly broken, when she placed Elton, much as she respected him, as a target to ward off the arrows pointing around her from all quarters.

When the inmates of the Grange met at dinner, several found themselves completely thrown out of their proposed paths by the unexpected conduct of others. Sir Philip's dignity was cast away on the perfectly calm, cheerful Elton, as much oblivious of the other's presence as if he were by magic invisible to sight, and hearing; for Elton recklessly cut across his conversation, as if sudden deafness had fallen upon [illegible] this so quietly done, that the other could [illegible] lip in silent rage. Something of Elton's [illegible] had shed an influence over Mariam; but to [illegible] eye, in it he read resignation allied to [illegible], and that false quiet they bring—dead

flowers, giving forth no odour, save a sickening memory of past fragrance. But others did not read her thus, and more than one wondered at the apparently cheerful tone with which she replied to all except Sir Philip, to whom a bow or monosyllabe alone was awarded; but *none* read that, beneath this outward show of peace, the unquiet heart was reckoning its own pulsations, to calculate how long it would be, before rest mightcome, and its task of propelling life cease.

Next day the Grange was in an uproar of amazement, discussion, refusing, consenting, and every strange and adverse feeling, when Elton seriously announced his acceptance by Mariam. Slavemasters and drivers are not indigenous to the States; many a good and perfect one is bred *at heart* in our isle of liberty. Angelina was one in petticoats. Nothing could equal her rage and disappointment at thus seeing Mariam emancipated from her tyranny; she, in her depth of cunning, better than any one else, had conceived all the other's bitter suffering and disgust at Sir Philip's loathsome attentions, and now she had freed herself, and, what was more painful than all, though Elton seemed the last man on earth to be her choice, the girl was evidently placidly content. Angelina unscrupulously, before both, called upon her mother to exert the authority vested in her, and forbid the engagement. Mrs. Adair, thus urged, commenced a sort of half authoritative, half deprecating refusal to sanction it; poor weak woman! the real kindness of a milk-and-water heart was turned to curds by her dread of her daughter's anger.

Before even Elton could reply, who had sat smiling quietly during the discussion so offensive to himself, Mariam did so, and with a dignity and decision which astonished all, none more than himself.

"If I am faithful in my recollection of the contents of my father's will," she said, "I believe the clause orders that before a certain time I shall choose an eligible husband; I think none here will dispute Mr. Elton's right to that title?"

"*Eligible?*" cried Angelina, forgetful of all policy; "surely, mama, you cannot as her guardian consider that Mr. Elton comes under this head? a man of his age compared with Miss Lincoln's!"

Still Elton said nothing, but sat smiling and glancing from one to the other, as if perfectly indifferent to the scene.

"I certainly think, Elton," hazarded the trembling Mrs. Adair, "that there is a great disparity between you. My position is a very delicate one; people may say I should have prevented it, and indeed it seems *rather* absurd."

"What was my friend Adair's age when you married him?" quietly asked Elton. "Comparison is sometimes a good method by which we attain facts; he was older than myself, although a dear friend, and, as far as I remember, at least your senior by twenty years."

"Mama!" cried Angelina, "will you allow yourself to be insulted in your own house?" she felt her cause failing.

"Permit me, madam," interrupted Mariam, "at once

to assert my right of choice; I am only too proud in the affection of such a man as Mr. Elton, where I have been so long degraded in my own eyes by the repulsive attentions of Sir Philip Montgomery." As she spoke, she placed her hand in Elton's.

Albeit a man not used to much show of sensibility, his hand trembled as he clasped hers, and the raised eyes, fixed on her face, had something so pure, so fatherly in their love, that it seemed painful to think a marriage, which many might cavil at, and ridicule, would perhaps destroy their regard; for ridicule is the fellest destroyer of every good sentiment, after all.

"Perfectly fulsome and disgusting!" fell from Angelina, as she curled her thin, contemptuous nose; "at all events, Miss Lincoln, after so many triumphs, has fulfilled an old adage, and 'picked up a crooked stick at last.'"

"Hold!" cried he, laughing; "I have let you say all you pleased until now. Depend upon it, Angelina, that (thanking you cordially for your beautiful simile) I can assure you this dear girl will find I am no 'crooked stick,' but one on which she may fearlessly lean, one strong, too, to baton all her enemies; and, as you quote old saws, let me follow so excellent an example, and strongly advise you 'not to hollo till we are all out of the wood,' and then let us see who will sing loudest."

CHAPTER XXI.

A SHORT time after the foregoing scene, Elton and Narcissus were walking together down an avenue in the ground. "I certainly think," said the latter, in continuation of their previous conversation, "that marriage is a fate, a predestined thing, both in act and inclination. I never felt the slightest wish to marry, and, when urged to it by Miss Adair, I proposed to the very lady you have been fortunate enough in securing, and failed signally; I never shall think of it again!"

"Yes, you will," answered Elton, confidently. "Marriage, as you truly say, is a predestined thing; but, like all things sent with us into the world at our birth, we have *several*, generally speaking, thrown in our way through life—one, a gift from above, if we are fortunate enough to discern it from its fellows; the others, temptations and luciferian, in every respect, for they blow a poor devil to——their master."

"Don't you think all things were destined for us before our birth?" asked Narcissus.

"Certainly not! To think that, I must suppose that no good intention—no good deeds of his own—would prevent a born assassin from cutting his predestined victim's throat. I believe *every thing*, the most trivial

we meet, an allotted, registered fate; but these are rocks or flowers in our path, according to our nature. We *must meet* all, and sense and religion were given to us to avoid the contact with some, to cling to others."

"Some things it seems impossible to avoid," quoth Narcissus, thoughtfully.

"Because folks rush on headlong, like wild bulls, of any place you please; whilst others trip lightly between the rocks and stones, until they come to a pleasant spot of verdure, and here they rest."

"How discern this spot, Mr. Elton?"

"Oh! 'tis not for *me* to preach you a sermon; but, rely upon it, if we seek a guiding hand by proper means, we may walk blindfolded amidst these said rocks; and, when something says internally to us, 'stop,' pull off our bandage, and see the bright green fields I speak of. I have found mine, and perhaps too verdant for my years, in Miss Lincoln!" He laughed as he said this.

"You are a great advocate for marriage *now*," said Narcissus, opening his eyes, "and I have heard you rail so much against it!"

"Because my hour had not come," whispered Elton; "and I thought it better to laugh myself, than let others ridicule my forced celibacy."

"I dare say matrimony is a very happy state," uttered the half-convinced man; "and I will confess I felt much disappointed when Miss Lincoln rejected me."

"Try again!" cried the other, eyeing him scrutinizingly aside. "Rely upon it, the man who does not

marry, is like a poor wretch having two legs, but one of them made of cork! He walks lop-sided all his life."

"I really think you are right!" answered the more than half-inclined benedick. "But how, knowing as little of ladies as I do, avoid one of those marriages, like sins as you say, cast temptation-like in our way, to submerge us if not resisted?"

"Depend upon it, Browne, that in the map of life, as I have described it, you have taken every path but the right one; and down some quiet little lane, where railroads have not yet cut their way, consequently your marching intellect turns aside from it, there is a fair and anxious maiden, sitting on a camp-stool, waiting patiently for you. Turn down the lane, my good fellow, pick up the stool, tuck the lady under your arm, and bring her home to your curacy."

"Mr. Elton, you have some one in your mind's eye, to speak so confidently."

"To be sure I have, one who has from the beginning been your good fate; she was made for you, and (oh! blind mole, burrowing ever in the dark) dying for love of you, and you would not see!"

"To whom *can* you allude?" exclaimed the puzzled man.

"To Angelina Adair—to what other?"

"Miss Adair! *I* marry Miss Adair! Oh! impossible; such a thought as matrimony never entered her head," cried the man, vigorously repulsing the more than once flitting thought through his brain, it was now becoming

too tangible. "I have always felt that, had she been of our rival church, her inclinations were decidedly cloistral."

A loud laugh involuntarily burst from Elton, which not a little disconcerted Narcissus's thoughts, for he felt this man must know her better than he possibly could; still his heart said nothing for her, not even his vanity was flattered: there was something very ante-feminine in his thoughts about her; she seemed destined to all appearance only to be a good fellow, in his eyes, to the end of her days. Elton, however, a thoroughly astute man of the world, was well pleased with the effect he had produced, and left it to generate good fruit in the not very fruitful mind of Narcissus.

When Elton rejoined Mariam, after their stormy meeting with Mrs. Adair and Angelina, any other man, especially one of his age, proud of the part she had taken in his favour, would perhaps have allowed *over* attention and devotion to disgust the girl; not so, Elton. He met her as a father might a dear child; he did not even kiss the hand ever ready to greet him; he was all respect and affection, and nothing of the lover; and this it was which made their interchange of thoughts and confidences so perfectly free on her part, for he never even in allusion spoke of their marriage. And thus it became to her idea one of those far off visions we deem it better not to meet half-way, but reserve all our defences till it arrives in positive battle array before us; for she could not disguise from herself that a marriage with him, though infinitely preferable to one with any other offered for her accep-

tance, had but patient endurance to meet with from herself, undertaken as the sole means of escaping a worse fate in the annoyances around her. The first gratification she derived from her engagement being proclaimed, was the indignant departure of Sir Philip, who too plainly, at last, felt how keen her dislike to himself must be, to induce her to marry a man of Elton's age to escape his assiduities. But if it be a painful labour to bring one's own mind to accept in idea an indifferent object as a future portion of ourself, how far more difficult a task to persuade a man, against his will and conviction, to propose for a person almost repugnant to his heart as a wife! But once you gain the slightest hearing, the perversity and love of variety in his human nature, does the work quickly, augean like though it be; and surely not lighter is this toil of inducing a non-marrying man to fall in love, or matrimony, not synonymous terms, with one he has been so much accustomed to, that the charm of novelty loses half its power. But a clever and determined person can work wonders, and immense was Elton's triumph, after literally cramming the words of solicitation into Narcissus's mouth, to find he had at last gained courage to pop them out again, in the form of a "Will you marry me, dear Ally Croker?" and the "Ally" of his forced choice was not the least inclined, despite all the "hems" and "haws" of his speech, to treat him with contempt. She took him in right good earnest for *better*, not for worse; for nothing could possibly be more offensive to her mind than maidenhood. And such is

the inherent, soothing vanity of our nature, so perfect a "heal all," that she persuaded herself fully, that in accepting him she should infuse gall and wormwood into the heart she of all others detested—Mariam's. She had arranged this girl's character in her jaundiced mind, as one so capricious, so all-grasping, that where she felt disposed to marry, a love of shewing, proving her power, made her trifle with hearts till she lost them. With this idea, great was her glory in parading her meek lamb in her silken, but well-attached cord before all eyes. Narcissus let all be done with himself unmurmuringly; he had acted as an older, wiser head than his own had induced and advised him to do, and he felt to a certain extent satisfied—not but that a feeling ever and anon stole irresistibly over him, that he would rather it had been Mariam than Angelina; for though in point of fact his junior, his intended seemed *much* his senior. In short, he felt more fear than love; and no earthly power could have induced him even to raise her hand to his lip, or even catch the flitting fair digits halfway, as they playfully tapped "her naughty boy's" cheek; for she had become quite infantine in her love, and it sat most awkwardly upon her. Whilst she was thus rejoicing, and shewing off her placid intended, to every one, the mover of this machinery, the steam power, Elton, sat behind the curtain of his deeds, laughing, and rubbing his hands. "And now, Mariam," he said, after announcing the startling event to her wondering ears, "I think I have by this act secured two things—your peace, for Angelina has not one drop of gall in her heart now; it is a

complete honeycomb, every cell overflowing with sweetness for Narcissus; she resembles those bees somewhere spoken of, which love to feed on thyme, from which they extract a juice all bitterness, but even while sucking it, it becomes honey, luscious honey. And surely thus all has turned to cloying richness in Angelina's heart!"

"And what besides my peace from sarcasm have you secured me?" she asked, smilingly.

"A much desired thing, I hope—a permitted visit to your aunt; she is a person I much wish to see you again on terms of affection with, and in all the business of love-making at the Grange, I think they can dispense with your society."

To this Mariam gladly consented, and while he was in all policy quietly endeavouring to gain his end, fortune favoured him. Narcissus bore as much as most men can with patience; but at last, finding his stubborn heart refused to smile on his position, and the lady's attentions becoming hourly more irksome, he resolved upon trying whether the old song spoke truly, and that absence makes the heart grow fonder.

With this good intention, he made a pressing excuse of duties, to fly the Grange; but Angelina was resolved to play Kathleen to this second St. Kenin, and follow wherever he might seek repose. It would not have been exactly the thing to accompany him; but this strong-minded girl had an invincible objection to procrastination, or any such thief of time, more agreeably passed in billing and cooing than maiden meditation;

consequently she proved to Mrs. Adair beyond contestation, that an immediate visit to town was indispensable, to order the wedding garments, the seaming of which "dear Narcissus was so impatiently watching for."

Good-natured, sentimental Mrs. Adair thought so too, and a slight hint sent all the visiters at the Grange flying off to various covers, and the Adairs left for Eaton Square, at which Elton rubbed his rejoicing hands, which had so well done their work.

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triumph as the fair Lady Montgomery, not least, per-
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and despised she now was! Reader, remember we are
painting a very weak human being in poor Kate—weak,
but not vicious; for her fault arose from a virtue, like the
illegitimate offspring of a hero. Beneath the weight of
all this, she was fast sinking to, let us hope, peace.

Adair hung over her, soothing her to the last, selfishly—for he felt every moment passed doubling his crime in Mariam's sight, even her friendship—all he now hoped for, the a blank in hope's chapter of chances.

The loss of her child became a fainter regret to heart, the memory of all she had lost stood out in cold relief. There was nothing remaining of all her splendour but the tatters of remorse, clinging around her in mockery—she, poor beggar for his supporting arm in mere charity, which had once seemed ever powerful to clasp her in passionate love! Oh! all was a blank page before her, save for one little word writ thereon—"remorse," and bitterly this ate into her soul; for sorrow's purifying hand had swept away the false happiness of her sin, the light thistle-down, and the rough prickly plant in all its uncouthness stood strongly planted at her feet. She could not uproot it; for Kate had not patience enough to water it with penitential tears till it should fall rotted to earth, leaving a smooth, even path for her footsteps. No, this she could not do; but she had courage to clasp its memory till the thorn entered her heart, when, wounded to death, she sunk into a remorseful grave, the sadder that she *knew* only pity would drop a tear on it—not that pity even which is akin to love, as preceding it, but the sad, cold, pale shadow which has risen from its ashes.

A foreign grave, a stranger land, gave a last home to pretty Kate Bateman, and, perhaps, this is the saddest thought of any; somehow we feel, the least

CHAPTER XXII.

THERE are two things whlch purify and sanctify earthly affections; these are sickness, and its frequent follower, death. Thus, as Adair hung over Kate, sinking into a state of low despondency and ill health, she became once again the Katty of their days of innocence.

In all she had been guilty of, a sustaining force at first was given in the love she bore her child—that removed, and all the vigour of life was gone; and then memory came forth, strong in power and conquering, marshalling in her train hours of happy, girlish joy—days of labour sweetened by an approving conscience; and lastly, a husband's kindness at first, and, *perhaps*, a want of that patient endurance on her part of subsequent harshness, which might have won him back; conjointly with this came the recollection of her hours of triumph as the fair Lady Montgomery, not least, perhaps, in her cup of sorrow, when she reflected how fallen and despised she now was! Reader, remember we are painting a very weak human being in poor Kate—weak, but not vicious; for her fault arose from a virtue, like the illegitimate offspring of a hero. Beneath the weight of all this, she was fast sinking to, let us hope, peace.

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A foreign grave, a stranger land, gave a last home to pretty Kate Bateman, and, perhaps, this is the saddest thought of any; somehow we feel, the least

thoughtful of us, that we owe a respect to the earth—the home-earth on which our first footsteps trod—to give it back its own again in dust to dust.

Adair rose from the grave a wiser man, a more determined one in character. The death of one beloved, forms us, for it takes away our crutches, with which we went limping on, and we stand alone! Oh! this is a very heart-aching thought at first; how we totter like infants—babies to so many coming cares; but how very vigorous we grow at last, and the renovated limbs gaining strength, we rush forward to fight our way alone, to prove our strength and purity, like emeralds, by the fire glowing around, to sanctify us.

Adair had lost much—a woman's supporting, upholding affection. At first, he shuddered at the chill this loss brought him; then he, even he reflected, "only pure gold is enduring, this was dross," and he grew strong in his loneliness and self-relying. Her death left him free to look around, and a first duty called him back to England, to seek out her father, as he had promised her; and next, to make arrangements, though almost ruinous to his dilapidated fortune, to pay to the last fraction the damages which had been awarded Sir Philip. And here we find him once again the supporter, though anonymously accomplished, of poor Bateman, on whom care had heavily fallen. The man's energy was insufficient to bear up against it. He tried pride, but that failed him; he had not one atom of it; its counterfeit, obstinacy, betrayed him, and, relying too much on it—mistaking it—he sunk into almost childish

helplessness, especially after reading his child's early death in the paper; for, though he had concealed himself from her to starve almost on a dry crust, in the obstinacy of his nature, which would listen to nothing, he had been hugging himself with the idea, like a wayward child, that she was seeking him every where, and at last would inevitably discover his retreat, and the poor weary arms full often stretched forth at full length, to clasp the imaginary shadow to his yearning heart. Alas! another held her too fast, and the bony arms had carried her down to his palace of dust. When the sad news reached him, the old man's strength of mind and body forsook him, and, as by an elfish spell, he sunk at once, without any intermediate state, into perfect childishness. Yet even thus he knew Adair, and only actual force could have made him abide a moment in his presence. Perhaps this was the severest punishment the other had ever met for any fault, for feeling in himself that, could all be explained, he was not so deeply sinning as having acted thoughtlessly, and with want of judgment; but how teach this to the childish old man, who once loved him so well, and who now wrung his thin cold hands, as the tears streamed from his eyes, and cried, "Richard, Richard, why have you taken her from me? Where is she? Will you not bring her back, back, back—back again?" and as each word fell from his lip, the eye grew more fixed and vacant, and the tottering steps struggled from the room, whilst the clenched hand, and heavy sobbing sigh, spoke all—he was *still* sensible enough to feel. Of mere worldly

reckoning or calculation, he had no thought left; thus Adair's only consolation was in being able to provide unseen for his comfort, and this charge he sacredly fulfilled, even amidst his own embarrassments. What wonder, then, that the once gay, witty Adair, grew grave and smileless! He walked onward like one reckoning every footfall with his shadow, until it should stop for ever on his grave.

Human nature is proverbially disposed to perversity; but woman's, is perversity itself, when she sets it off at full gallop after some cherished idea, which will especially perplex, or thwart some one to whom she bears a *little* ill-will—we must not talk of hatred, 'tis so ugly a vice for a good Christian. Mrs. Wilton very nearly hated all the Adairs, and rather unjustly, as we have shown, nearly included Mariam in that circle, round which all the witches she could conjure up, danced unhealthy dances on their midnight broomsticks, sweeping away every kindlier thought. Though holding little intercourse with the Adairs at the Grange, still she had become acquainted with the fact, that Richard was an erased member from that household hearth. There had been a time when Mrs. Adair's affection for her son would have overruled even Angelina's stern propriety, and the prodigal would have been welcomed home. But, alas! now, for him there was no fatted calf—no open arms. He was barred out of that home which should have drawn him into repentance, if he needed it; consolation, if he regretted his fault. Prudery borrowed virtue's white flowing

robes, in which *she* walks so stainless and charitable, ever ready in their folds to conceal the repenting sinner, and, trailing them through the mud, rushed onward to proclaim, with stentorian lungs, the frailty of a poor mortal, who, like overheated glass, had cracked, but not shivered, in the fire's too close embrace.

"It would be most indelicate, madam," said Angelina to her mother, "to admit Richard into this house, after so dreadful an act, especially now that dear Narcissus is here by right; his sacred calling should not be insulted by such a contact!" And thus, once again, as too often is the case, the sacred calling was divested of all sanctity, by the ill-judging, badly disposed, and malevolent; for to whom should the erring fly, if not to those ordained to save?

Mrs. Adair was perfectly satisfied with all she said; Angelina had risen much in her mother's estimation since the orange blossoms were budding for her brow at the *modiste's*. Angelina had more than prudery urging her to this expulsion of her brother; she knew his embarrassments, probable ruin, in meeting, not alone the damages, but other liabilities; for this very clever lady lost sight of nothing of her own interest, and dreaded her mother's *weakly* assisting him, to the detriment of herself; so poor Adair was left to fight alone. Mariam durst not urge for him; indeed, she was in ignorance of nearly all, for, had she been aware of his real position, not even maiden delicacy would have withheld her from pleading for him to Elton. Strange to say, for once, a mutual sympathy—though arising from very differ-

ent motives—induced Elton to unite with Mrs. Adair and Angelina, in "deeming it better to conceal from Mariam the death of Lady Montgomery," which they had seen in the *Post*. Delicacy kept others silent at the Grange before any member of the family, and thus she came to town in her ignorance, believing him married to Kate, who, poor misguided girl, was far more happily wedded, than in becoming the *perhaps* despised, neglected wife of Adair,—for the very best look lightly on that which has been lightly won, the weighty payment is all the woman's.

Let us return to Mrs. Wilton, whose fate took her, in company with her seldom absent children, into the Zoological Gardens, one fine, quiet morning, and there, amongst the nursemaids, mammas, and children, loitered a desultory looking man—judging by his slow, languid gait; he did not seem to care for the animals, he looked at none, nor children, nor women—he avoided them. Sometimes an autumnal flower drew him aside a moment, then on he strolled again, evidently one not at peace with nature, for creating so gloomy a being as himself.

Mrs. Wilton was a conjecturing woman, like most of mind or imagination. "A young widower," she thought, looking at his hatband, and her heart drew near the solitary; and she walked behind listening to her girls' prattle, and wondering whether he had any such to soothe him. She was lost in thoughts of this nature, and the tide flowed on in gentle womanly feelings of pity, so much so, that when the stranger sud-

denly turned, and she found herself face to face with Richard Adair, the surprise did not quite obliterate kindlier feelings, and yet she coloured deeply as she bowed, paused, and stopped. We have said she was a woman of no common mould; too independent to ask, "What will the world say?" too good not to be *perhaps* too indifferent to its wickedness, for she was young and handsome.

Pity commenced, perversity seconded the affair; and, after a few embarrassed questions and replies on both sides, they found themselves walking side by side, talking in a more friendly manner than they had ever done before. Then, too, children are dreadful go-betweens, and almost always in some way illustrate Gavarin's *Enfans Terribles*. Simple, well-brought up children are Lavater's truest disciples, and read countenances by their own truth of heart. In less than five minutes, Mrs. Wilton's girls were holding one each hand of poor Adair, whose saddened face smiled downwards on those who were now, what poor Kate had once been, for she was ever before him.

The more Mrs. Wilton conversed with him, the greater grew her pity, and consequent disgust towards his family. Before the walk terminated, she no longer wondered Mariam had loved him, and blessed fate that her engagement to Elton precluded other thoughts now, for she knew Kate had never been his wife, and was now no more. The one most interested, had alone been kept in ignorance. Mariam was not even alluded

to. Mrs. Wilton thought her safe in the country for months; and, after all we have said to prepare the reader for facts, it will not startle him, or her, to hear that, when they parted, she gave a cordial hand to his warm grasp—for he deeply felt her generosity—and added a very kind invitation to call and see her.

Mrs. Wilton having taken this step, was not a woman to stop there, and dwindle down into a mere receiver of a common call of politeness. No; she was a perfectly kind-hearted being; and, when he presented himself next day, she placed herself on the pedestal of her matronhood, which seemed to her as far removing her from any possible danger or scandal, as if she were eighty years of age. Then, too, it was so well known she had declined many good offers, that it never entered into her imagination that any one could suppose she would re-marry; all this taken into consideration, she felt so strong in herself, that, resolving to ameliorate his state of despondency if possible, she bravely attacked it at its source, while she blamed, pitied, and soothed him. Verily, it was a merciful act, nobly, generously done, and he felt it, especially when the trouble he durst scarcely look at when they met, faded, like gathered flowers by the handling, and the purest, truest gratitude sprung up in his heart towards her. With him, no other feeling was possible, but with her? True, she was older, and self-strong, but there is nothing more dangerous than comforting a handsome young man; we grow mothers for a loved baby, and feel so

much inclined to lullaby him to rest. This is all Love's doing, else why did he take the form of a chubby child?

We don't say Mrs. Wilton was *exactly* in love, but in great danger; and, when leading the conversation one day to Mariam, she watched the heightened colour in his pale cheek, and the flashing eye, as he spoke contemptuously of her absurd engagement to "that old fool Elton," she felt a wish generate a sigh, both of which arose from the thought—

"I do not wonder she loved him;" and then followed the curious desire of knowing, "did he ever like her? if so, why not have proposed?"

Adair was a frequent visiter; he played with the children, and this was to her willingly reconciled mind an all-sufficient reason for his coming. Like a sister, she spoke of his affairs, advising, and with her strong mind, guiding, his shaken, reckless energies. Often he tried to lead the subject to Mariam; this she avoided, when once convinced he had loved her, for he admitted freely now, that which once he so sedulously concealed. All the world is a game of mental hide and seek; none act quite openly. Thus she most guardedly withheld from him that Mariam had loved him, this really was a duty on her conscience now; and here we will leave them,—him, to fructify his avowed intention "of settling his affairs soon, and going abroad for ever;" her, "to comfort this poor young man, cast off by his heartless family, as she would a brother, nothing more; no, *that*

were a mad impossibility!" And whilst they were thus occupied, Mariam was preparing the most stupid, and almost ever-failing thing in existence, "an agreeable surprise for her dear aunt!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

One day Elton called in Eaton Square, the one after the Adairs' return, and finding Mariam impatiently awaiting him, he drew her arm under his own, and walked towards Russell Square. "I will leave you to see your aunt alone," he said at the door, "and call in an hour's time."

"Mrs. Wilton is out, but will return shortly," answered the servant, in reply to her question of "at home?" "I will go up then, and wait," Mariam said to Elton as he turned away.

"And I must hunt out that stupid boy, Dick," muttered he, walking down the street.

See what a game of cross purposes and odd chances life, *real* life, is! Mariam ran up-stairs, the servant omitted mentioning to the niece the aunt's constant visiter, awaiting her return in the drawing-room. Mariam threw open the door, a man started up, exclaiming—

"My dear Mrs. Wilton, at last!"

The words spoke volumes of friendly intercourse—he turned—Mariam gave a low interjectional cry, and dropped on a chair.

"Good heavens, Ma——, Miss Lincoln!" he corrected the first word as he hastened towards her.

"Richard! and here!" she exclaimed in a low tremulous tone, for woman's quick-sightedness read something so strange in an instant's glance, in this evident intimacy at Mrs. Wilton's, which his exclamation denoted, and more, the perfect ease with which he was awaiting that lady's return, that a painful shiver passed over her frame.

"Ay, *here*, Miss Lincoln," he replied bitterly, "not y et an outcast from every hearth. Mrs. Wilton is not a mere Christian by name, but in deeds; strange, is it not, that a creature of this hour of practical worldliness, theoretical charity, should *dare* hold forth a hand to a poor devil like myself, leprous from very vice!" He stood upright before her as he spoke, looking down upon her in cold contempt. She raised her eyes as he spoke, feeling that a downcast look was not for her to wear.

"You are very bitter against me, Richard," she said sadly; "I do not deserve it, none has suffered more regret for another, than I for you; from my very soul I have grieved at your fall."

"Pshaw!" he impatiently cried, "leave cant to older lips; let yours utter something *still* of the spirit Heaven breathed on them—charity! They are too ruddy and fresh, Mariam, to cant mouldy phrases out of date!"

"Alas! alas!" she cried, "and is it still so? has nothing of your dislike towards me yet abated? Forget me as I once seemed to you, and begin a new page in life with me, whereon I may write myself your sincere friend, and you believe it—*do*, Richard."

The man looked down upon her, and the eyes grew

bloodshot with the hot tears beneath their surface; for she had never seemed so much to be loved as now, when her pitying voice sympathized with the clouded eye of supplicating emotion.

"When I spoke of your fall, I meant," she continued, "the loss of that dignified self-esteem we all should possess—the consciousness of having wronged none. I thought of poor——"

"Don't speak of her *now*," he exclaimed, turning hastily towards the table, and brushing away one drop of moisture oozing through the burning eyeballs. "Heaven have mercy upon me, poor Katty!"

He had taken his hat from the table, intending to quit this painful scene. As he turned, Mariam's glance fell on the deep band,—his dress she had not yet noticed.

"Merciful Heaven!" she exclaimed, in horror, "is Lady—is Mrs. Adair——"

Her look of surprise and horror transfixed his steps; he replaced the hat on the table after a hasty glance, whither hers directed it; and, drawing nearer, leaned towards the trembling girl, and whispered, as if the words uttered in a louder tone would have awakened some spirit he had lulled to momentary quiet,—

"Yes, Mariam, so it is! We live and breathe, girl; one day all life, a promise of fourscore years and ten in eye and step; and the next, why, we are nothing, and, like poor Katty, still in our teens! 'Tis very sad, is it not?"

His head bowed in bitterness of reflection as he

spoke this. Mariam burst into tears, so gushing and genuine that they at once calmed his more inward grief.

"You are not all so cold and heartless as I have thought you," he said, bending down, and with one hand on her shoulder; he strove with the other gently to remove hers, pressing her handkerchief to her weeping eyes. "Let me see your tears, Mariam; they soothe and reconcile me to my species, for I thought all brutes —all but one, and she has been as a guardian spirit to my reckless heart of late."

"Do you mean Mrs. Wilton?" she asked, looking up, as she resigned her hand to his clasp. "Oh, yes! she is good, I know, but how to *you* amazes me."

"Because I have fallen!" He spoke in some bitterness.

"Do not mistake what I intended expressing," she said deprecatingly. "I meant not the mere worldly phraseology in like cases. I would have expressed that you must have fallen in self-esteem, having led another downwards; some precipices we cannot glide down, we fall, crushed and crushing."

"Mariam, were the deed to do again, I would do it," he said resolutely. "A woman with her child, from which her ruffian husband would have torn her, fled to me for protection. What I did was commenced with noble intentions—the devil makes his paving-stones of these,—if I lost her, God knows, it was not from vice on either part, but where take her? Had I known Mrs.

Wilton as I now know her, to her I would have brought a suffering sister, and have dared Sir Philip to lay one fault to her charge."

"My aunt is a pure Christian," uttered Mariam, faintly; something pained her in his manner of speaking of the other. We are none of us perfect, and jealousy is a stronghold with our enemy. "But for this trouble you would never have known her; the purest flowers are closed by day, and give forth all their beauty and sweetness at night."

"I will apply this simile to you, Mariam; but for a sudden emotion I should never have caused a tear of yours to flow. I am pleased I have seen it, for I thought nothing could move you."

"I am not very expansive in expressing my feelings, but, believe me, I can feel deeply. You think me a strange girl, do you not?" she hastily continued, "in so freely speaking to you on a subject which mere prudes would condemn me for appearing even to comprehend; but my mother taught my childish heart never to play the hypocrite: thus I often speak where, perhaps, I should seem ignorant."

"Oh, ever be thus, Mariam!" he said, seating himself beside her, affectionately; there was nothing of love-making in the act; there seemed too heavy a weight on either heart, for love's thistle-down to rest there.

"You shall approve me," she said, looking up with a faint smile, to try and chase the cloud from his brow; "and I know one I sincerely respect will."

"You mean Elton?" he replied sternly. "Can you

respect him? A warmer feeling, if possible, might excuse his folly, but I cannot understand respect."

"Yes, respect, Richard, and sincere, too, for one of the worthiest of his sex. Of more, we have never spoken; he *knows* I could not love him."

"Why does he *know* that? Why have accepted him then?"

She replied to the first question only.

"He *knows*, and asks no more; and my greatest regret will be, when, the day of our union coming, I shall be forced to cheat my own heart into a different feeling towards him than the child's love of to-day."

"Then, in Heaven's name, why have accepted him? You are not a foolish girl, to do so serious a thing without consideration; some motive must have induced this act; if not affection, what can it be?"

"Do not seek to penetrate too deeply into the motives of a woman's conduct, Richard. I was forced, for peace sake, to choose a husband. Mr. Elton pointed out to me my position in all its painful colouring. I knew, he knew, I never should marry from affection, and I engaged myself to him as I did."

She stopped suddenly, a blush rose, and then in an instant became crushed by so fearful a pallor, that involuntarily Adair placed an arm around her, deeming she was on the point of fainting; the memory of her hasty error in accepting Sir Philip, almost choked her with emotion, for she remembered in a single thought, all the unfortunate events following in its train, of which conscience did not quite hold her guiltless.

"Mariam, I beseech you to speak to me in candour," he cried, forgetting all at that moment, but the doubt giving light to the darkness around him. "Tell me, for you are so strange, so incomprehensible a girl, that you must speak for me to know you—judge you from mere appearances, I dare not, for my own sake. Tell me, Mariam, was Elton right when he once assured me you loved——"

She looked upon him in so much wild affliction, that he paused suddenly; to own her love now, would be almost a crime in her sight, if voluntarily done, there seemed so many barriers between them of vows and death; while yet she had power to deny it, she did so, and rising from his clasping arm, uttered, while the pale lips trembled at the untruth—

"I have never loved." In breathing this, she knew that it was doubly destroying all regard for her in his heart; it was indeed a self-sacrifice, for she passed for possessing two hateful faults in his, or any man's eyes; she stood a self-convicted, cold, heartless girl, who, from the mere love of trifling with affection, had accepted and then scorned Sir Philip, remaining unscathed herself amidst all emotion; yet she looked in his face so sadly, that though his momentary hope was crushed, (for he could not imagine that strength of mind which upheld her in this severe trial,) he felt sincere pity for the sorrowing girl before him, convinced that some secret, unavowed care oppressed her.

"Mariam, my poor girl, I pity you most sincerely," he said, taking her hand; "and indeed it has been a

sad fate to both of us; for I believe now, that struggling with a nature not yet awakened to love, you have tried to meet the affection on my part, which you could not be blind to, for I may own, now that my once pride of heart, which feared rejection, exists no more, from the first hour of our unfortunate meeting I loved you, and all my seeming bitterness against you, arose from doubting a return; all my sorrow has arisen from recklessness, when assured of your coldness towards me. Oh, heavens! why drive two in contact, who might have loved so truly, been so blessed? *unis d'habitation et non de cœur, c'est un tourment!* and none but the immortal spirits know what I have suffered."

Whilst he spoke, she had stood statue-like and cold, all her aching was in her throbbing heart. In outward seeming she was senseless to emotion; her eyes, glassy and fixed, did not move from his face.

"God help us, Marie," he said, pressing both her hands affectionately in his own; "I read you truly, your kind heart feels its own poverty towards me, and grieves that it can give but regret and commiseration; we are both of us to be pitied, let us grieve for each other, in this we may find at least a mutual feeling."

She amply obeyed him in sorrowing, but for what, her lips did not say; only the tears gushed from her eyes, as she hastily drew away the hands he held, and pressed them over her clouded sight, raining down their weighty load. There was no effort or thought on her part, to repulse him as he drew her gently on his bosom, and the sobbing girl laid her head on that home,

where every better thought was for herself, and prayed in heart-broken estrangement from all hope, or energy, that her life might pass away; for how acknowledge her affection, when one so good and generous as Elton must be sacrificed? The girl knew the extent of her own strength, and durst not abide the temptation of his prayers, if the veil were withdrawn from his eyes, which concealed her heart from his view. There are acts of heroism in the world, far greater than those of brute courage, practised by warriors of old; such a one was hers, as she withdrew from those enfolding arms, where she never again might be held, and with a strong effort, yet rendered almost abortive in persuasive power by the deep agony imprinted on her countenance, bade, besought him to go.

How self-satisfied is our nature! We engender an idea in our minds, and, convinced of the infallibility of our judgment, permit it all its own devious ways, to the total destruction of our happiness. So self-convinced was Adair that he had correctly judged Mariam's coldness towards himself, and that any further effort to move her would be vain, that he turned from the sobbing girl, who had sunk on a chair, and prepared with a heavy heart to leave her. Had he loved her less, it would not have been thus—he would have sought at any price to win her; but so deep was his love, that he felt to call her his, unless her whole soul accompanied the gift, would have been a gift of misery to him. Through her tears, she saw how his strong arm trembled as he stretched it forth to remove his hat

from the table. She saw the swollen veins in the agitated brow, the eyes bloodshot with the burning watching of the last hour, to detect a glimpse of hope for himself—she saw this, and the girl's strong resolution nearly gave way. His back was turned towards her, yet she had seen all—and Elton, Kate, every thing was forgotten but his agony at parting; she stretched forth her hands, the quivering lip breathed, scarcely uttered, Richard; she was on the point of avowing all—her very soul was on her lips—when the loud-sounding knocker announced the return of Mrs Wilton. On such trifles hang our fate often! Her arms dropped by her side, the words fainted in her heart, and when he turned, the statue before him was one worthy his thought of her—a loveless girl, one, not yet awakened by her own heart's pulsations.

Perhaps in the world there was not a less conceited man than Adair—one less prone to deem himself an object of interest to a woman; still, unless he had been a fool, it must have crossed his mind, that more than a common interest urged Mrs. Wilton to meet him with the *empressement* she had evinced, being aware too, as he was, of her prejudice against him at one time. Until the present moment, he had permitted events to pursue their course, without troubling himself to ask where they would terminate; but now there was something so unnerved in his heart, that he felt it would be impossible to meet another, who perhaps loved him, in Mariam's presence. He owed a debt of gratitude to Mrs Wilton for her recent kindness towards himself, which he felt he

should be ill repaying by a sentiment of disgust; and such inevitably would have been his feeling, had he observed a coldness on her part, a jealous sentiment towards Mariam.

Actuated by this thought, which was the growth to maturity of a moment, he passed through a side-door on the landing, as Mrs. Wilton entered by the larger drawing-room, without considering for a moment the strangeness of the proceeding, should he be discovered. But the opening of one door united its sound with the closing of the other, and Mrs. Wilton, who, on entering, had asked her servant, "Whether Mr. Adair was in the drawing room?" and, being answered in the affirmative, hastened up-stairs, leaving the remainder of the man's information to the will of the winds "and Miss Lincoln," and, opening the door, found herself in the presence of the visibly agitated Mariam. When we have a sole-engrossing thought, the thing which should afford us the greatest surprise loses all its effect. Mrs. Wilton involuntarily glanced round the room, forgetting that she had not seen Mariam for many weeks, then a more composed feeling, subduing her disappointed surprise at not seeing Adair, she clasped the other in her arms, and kindly welcomed her. It would have been impossible not to notice the trace of grief on Mariam's countenance. After the first kindly words spoken, her aunt gazed for an instant fixedly upon her, and then, as a thrill of pain passed through her own heart, for she was but woman, he inquired, "Has any one been here? Mr. Adair, I mean," she more boldly added. "Yes,"

answered Mariam, and, despite all self-contro
blood tinged her cheek. "He was here when
and he is gone," she concluded; and, speakin
eye, that truest index of the soul, fixed it
gaze of questioning fear on the other's face.

Until that moment Mrs. Wilton had not
her own heart as regarded her friendship
When we are in an uncertain state of mind,
look or word acts as "open sesame," and
the door, showing us facts beyond. She had
herself, without much argument, that gratif
finding him so different to what she had imag
to be a sort of *amende honorable* for past inju
whole grafted on pity, made her seek and up
Her niece's sad and inquiring look *awakened* h
woman, her first thought was jealousy, anxiet
what had passed between them. The lips c
question, the brow grew severe; at that mo
eye fell on an opposite glass, and in it she b
own handsome face, distorted by ungenerous
and Mariam's sad, patient one, suffering, and
suffer more, writ thereon. She closed her lic
compressing action; a feeling of disgust tow
self was uppermost; here was she, who had so
reprehended and opposed Mariam's affection
man, loving him herself. Though still young, sh
as the almost child before her, who seemed so
to care, and in her own eyes she grew old and
to bring a last strong argument against hersel
recollection, in the vow she had made on the d

of her worthy husband, never to give a stepfather to her girls, the door burst open, and in they both bounded and clung around her; as she stooped to caress them, and hide her own confusion, she registered anew her vow; and, rising with a clear, serene brow, flung her arms round Mariam's neck, and said —

"Forgive me, dear child, the coldness of my reception. I was grieved that you had met Mr. Adair again; but we will speak of it all presently, and, believe me, Mariam, he has not a sincerer friend, or a more pitying one than myself, poor fellow!"

The woman had lost half her womanhood, and found an angel's strength.

CHAPTER XXIV.

It is not every thing, gaining a man's consent to marry you; it is not even, then, as our neighbours say, *un fait accompli*, and this Angelina was forced to admit the truth of. Narcissus, followed to his *lair*, found no chance of further escape; he could not desert his flock—he was too good a pastor for that; all he could do, was to keep as much as possible within the sheepfold; and there stood Angelina, like a rapacious wolf, gazing at him outside the paling—for the flock she cared nothing. What to her now were the Sunday schools? the sick and poor? They had been as stout ash-sticks on which she had leaned to help her forward; but, the goal obtained, away she flung her supporters—no more outgoings in thick shoes, as we have seen her, nor tracts, nor sick potions! For these she substituted morning consultations with her *modiste*, marriage settlements, and love potions in the evening unsparingly poured into Narcissus's ears. In the day he managed to avoid these, but in the evening, alas! there was only Christian patience to uphold him; for, the nearer the time approached, the more closely the cup of bliss advanced to his lip, the more repugnant grew his feelings; he was too simple-minded a man to

be able successfully to conceal his state of mind. Even the friendship he once felt for her, was rapidly turning to disgust. Her vanity set all down to the score of extreme bashfulness; her mother, too, saw nothing in his conduct but an assurance of future happiness for her child, with a man so truly zealous and pious, that he would not even permit his affections to interfere with his duties; but others saw, or suspected. In vain Angelina hinted, about a fortnight after their arrival, "that Madame Devy was the most punctual *modiste* she had ever met with—that *all* was completed, even within the promised time!"

Narcissus's face was buried in a book,—he couldn't hear.

Mamma had quitted the room, and then the down-cast-eyed maiden drew near, and offered her boy a treat. "He should have a peep at the wedding dress, it was so chaste and pretty!"

He certainly was the *first* of these adjectives, for he blushed at the very name of such a thing, and still more painfully when she displayed its modest purity; for he felt he ought to do, what he could not, speak out, or else "for ever after hold his peace!" How he wished this possible! All this Angelina too felt, and, hastily seeking her mother, poured into her ear the duty incumbent on her, "to make him fix the day," as he was too shy himself to do so, despite his evident annoyance at the prolonged delay.

Poor Mrs. Adair thought it all true; she only saw through Angelina's eyes, and the veil of sentimental

feeling enveloping her mind; she was a woman of sighs and tears—love knots and broken hearts; and being resolved, if possible, in every case to tie the knots, and to prevent the last named, she undertook to speak to the swain. Something in Angelina's heart told her, though even unacknowledged to herself, that *he* was in no hurry, whatever *she* might be; and this made her recommence her bitterness against all others, especially as her once dear friend, Mrs. Bruce, never met her, which was a frequent occurrence, without anxiously inquiring "When?" well feeling, with her shrewdness, that there was a painful delay somehow. "Heaven keep me from my friends!" all may cry.

Elton no longer came to her (Angelina's) aid; he had secured all he cared for—Mariam's peace at the Grange; and as every moment she could possibly so employ was passed with her aunt, and Elton, having led Narcissus up to the proposal and acceptation, left him to pursue his way unaided, Angelina felt that a word from him might be of great benefit to her cause, for she had a faint idea that he had in some manner influenced Narcissus to propose. A sort of grateful sentiment made her forbear annoying Mariam; but now that Elton sat a quiet looker-on, disregarding the obvious want of impatience on her lover's part, all her bile arose, doubly envenomed, against him and his affianced bride. She plainly perceived that, though Mariam tacitly accepted Elton as her future husband, that it had been done to escape the importunity of others; for the girl winced whenever allusion was made to her marriage,

hoping that, for the sake of following a good example set by one he evidently looked up to, Narcissus would fix the day, if Elton preceded him. All her energies were called into activity to make this marriage the leader to her own; and thus again commenced Mariam's persecutions, and a host of sarcasms levelled against Elton.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Adair spoke to Narcissus, whose painfully acute agitation was perfectly ludicrous; and at last he ensconced himself behind an avowed dislike to hasty marriages, as being little productive of real happiness, and he thought they had better know one another better before entering into so solemn an engagement. This Mrs. Adair combated; as the engagement already existed, nothing but marriage could follow, and why defer their happiness from a foolish and old-fashioned idea?

The wretched benedick turned pale as she spoke of "happiness;" it was indeed a mockery to his ear. He was nevertheless obliged to yield, and a month thence was the time fixed. Not even this soothed Angelina's wounded pride; she could not disguise to herself his unwillingness, nor the covert smiles of the Bruce clique, and the unpitying Elton, (to whom she had cast down a gauntlet of late, by her persecution of Mariam,) who commented on the pale anxiety depicted in Narcissus's face lest he should be jilted by her.

One face certainly, was pale in Eaton Square—Mariam's. Since the day she had met Adair at her aunt's, she had carefully avoided another meeting with him; indeed the thing seemed so mutually arranged between

them; for whilst her aunt was, true, kind, Christian, subduing her own once growing affection for him, and on the other seeking some possible means of making the two happy, who she felt convinced still well loved one another, Adair took all out of her power, by writing her a most grateful affectionate letter, in which he bade her adieu, alleging as a motive, that probably her kindness towards him might draw down the indignation of his family on her niece, Miss Lincoln, as he was not a received guest in his mother's house.

His departure was a source of much annoyance to more than one; but the motives of some must shew themselves as our tale progresses. Mrs. Wilton had warmly taken his cause in hand, and argued with Mariam's heart, though against her resolution and fate, that, stern as she otherwise might have been against the man who coldly, deliberately, enticed a woman from her husband, Adair never, except by his enemies, could be classed with such a one; erring, faulty he had been, but a kindly heart had led him to this. And more, she added, that it was the duty of a virtuous woman, by every possible means, to reclaim a man, tottering from very recklessness on the brink of destruction. Poor Mariam felt all the truth of her words; but how meet them but with tears and regret? and what wonder if she grew pale and trembling at every allusion to her marriage? And there seemed but faint hope of delaying this much longer; for even Elton sometimes spoke of the necessity of some conclusion, though delicately, kindly done, like one forced to impose a painful duty on her. Some-

times he would meet Angelina's sarcasms and urgings for their marriage, by a firm yet serio-comic resolution not to be married by any but Narcissus; and, out of respect for his cloth, a fixed determination not to precede his union with herself. Eaton Square thus became any thing but what the abode of two bride's elect might be supposed in justice to be—one (Angelina) was all doubt and fear lest her marriage should by some adverse circumstance never take place—Mariam in agony lest hers should in earnest be accomplished. The only cheerful face, Elton's, became suddenly clouded like the rest, and an unsettled, nervous excitement took the place of his generally calm temperament.

"I am sick of the very name of marriage," he said hastily one day, in reply to a sarcasm of Angelina's about the delay on Mariam's part in fixing his; "and, if you possessed one grain of common delicacy and feeling, you would think of something else too at the present time—your unfortunate brother banished by your influence from his home, and, all-supporting affection failing him, rushing madly, recklessly, into every excess of the turf and its companions, which means ruin."

As he spoke he glanced at Mariam, and saw the cold shudder creep over her frame, and quiver on the lip, which however said nothing.

"My brother deserves every thing which may accrue to him," was Angelina's amiable reply; "and I am in nowise surprised at his present excesses, when we consider the infamy of his past life."

"Well, Miss Adair," uttered Mariam, faintly, "it is indeed to be hoped, should you ever need pity and excuses for human frailty, that they may be given you less sparingly than you award them to others. Heaven help poor Richard!"

"Of course," retorted the other, "we all know Miss Lincoln will take his part, if not from perversity of character and disposition, from waywardness of affection; but, indeed, we must all admire the generosity of heart prompting a defence of one who, though loved, slighted the unasked-for gift."

"Never mind, Mariam, child," said Elton, gently taking her hand, "I love you, just because you loved my godson, Dick, poor boy; and an old fellow like myself may be proud indeed of your confiding friendship, which gives him a right to protect you, to the despair of so many younger ones; let me see, how many do I know of?" Here he commenced reckoning on his fingers, and with a glance towards Angelina, which made her thrill with rage, he continued, "Out of delicacy we will not name the rejected, but pass them over like the toasted dead—in solemn silence.

"I really wish you would not be always bickering as you are, all of you," sighed Mrs. Adair. "I never saw three persons who less resembled persons——"

"About to marry?" asked he, laughing. "Never mind, Mrs. Adair; depend upon it, we are reserving all our honey for the moon which clogs with it."

"I'm sure, Elton, I shall be delighted when that time arrives; for I have had little peace with one thing and another of late."

"Has not the ordering of Angelina's wedding dress, not to mention her and Narcissus's billing and cooing, gratified and pleased you. Most ladies delight in such things. By the way, Angelina," he said, turning towards her, "is Narcissus in disgrace? I have not seen him here this age—that reads days in lovers' parlance; and I saw him last evening walking with a methodistical-looking fellow, ten times more melancholy in appearance than himself, *if possible*, for certainly your cruelty is making ravages on his health and beauty."

"Madame Devy's assistant has called, if you please, ma'am," said a servant, opening the door.

"Come, Angelina, put off that frown, and smile white satin and silver," cried Elton.

"Madame Devy has sent for Miss Lincoln's orders," answered she, in exultation; for she knew every step forward towards matrimony was one of despair to Mariam. The poor girl's head drooped, but she raised it, and hastily exclaimed—

"I have not sent for her." There was something so painful in this situation and its allusions, that now she could not appeal to Elton's aid.

"I sent for her," answered Mrs. Adair, "as Mariam's guardian; it is my place to see that all due preparations shall be made for her approaching marriage."

Elton saw the hand directing all this, and rising

instantly, cried with a tone of authority, which his position there gave him—

"Not this morning, if you please, madam; pray, tell the person to call some other day. Mariam has promised me a walk; and, moreover, when we marry" (the word was slightly accentuated), "both our tastes are so simple, I doubt if we shall require Madame Devy's aid."

Mariam's eyes filled with tears as she looked up, astonished amidst her gratitude, in the man's face; she could not comprehend him, but she felt all his watchful generosity.

"Come, child," he added, "run and put on your bonnet, or we shall lose all this fine frosty day."

She did not wait a second command, but the door closed behind her as Angelina cried—

"Upon my word, madam, it seems you are no longer mistress in your own house, to command or be obeyed."

"Obedience commences *before* marriage, Angelina," he said, laughing, to turn the brewing storm. "I am teaching it to my future wife; and you too are learning it, for you are obliged to a great extent to submit to Narcissus' will."

There was too much significance in his tone and look for her to boldly dare unpleasant truths by retorting.

"Settle it amongst you," sighed the dispirited Mrs. Adair—her spirit was crushed by the heavy, unsentimental air around her; "for I am tired of all these extraordinary proceedings, so very different to what took place when I married."

A few moments more found Elton and Mariam arm-in-arm, proceeding towards Russell Square.

"Mariam," he said, after a silence of some minutes, "don't you think me a very strange man?"

"In what?" she inquired, with some confusion; the conversation of the morning had filled her heart with a strange fear; she dreaded what his next words might be.

"Why, in possessing a right which so many would use intrusively—that of urging the fulfilment of our engagement."

She was perfectly silent; how thank a man for clemency in such a case? and what other sentiment could she profess?

"You are silent," he continued, "and that is worthy your candour. I know, child, you cannot *love* an old fellow like myself; you accepted me because I was less repulsive to your feelings than any other offered; and I proposed myself as a barrier against their attacks. All I ask you is, not to judge me severely—respect, if you cannot quite love. I will never intrude my attentions until the day I see that we *must* marry; and I suppose that day will come, sooner or later."

He looked fixedly at her as he spoke.

"I *do* respect you, Mr. Elton," she replied, looking up timidly in his face.

He pressed her arm kindly, and then hastily exclaimed, as if the thought were linked with his previous conversation, "Poor Dick—poor Dick! do you know, Mariam, that boy is my greatest affliction; for I feel as though

I had not quite done my duty to him? I should have acted as his guardian with more decision, and not have permitted his foolish mother to try her absurd practical follies upon him, as she has done. She alone is answerable for all. And you too, a little, Mariam," he added suddenly, fixing his eyes on the girl's glowing face; "for your too great susceptibility has caused much misery, for you loved this poor boy of mine well —did you not?"

"Oh, Mr. Elton!" fell from her lips, as her troubled gaze sought the ground, "for mercy's sake, drop this conversation; it is painful in the extreme between us."

"And vain now, my poor girl, is it not? Well, I wish it had been otherwise for both your sakes, for you would have been happier with him than with me; and yet it would pain me deeply to lose you now." During all this sentence, his eyes never once quitted her face.

"Have you heard of him lately?" she inquired, with effort. "I hear so much to pain me of him, if true."

"Heard? yes; he is running the maddest course any one can follow," he replied with energetic annoyance. "This is my greatest trouble. Ruin on all sides, he plunges headlong on, and one of the best creatures in existence, without a hope to excite, or friend to guide to better things, is, I fear, irrevocably lost; but here we are at your aunt's. We will resume this subject another day; I will leave you, and call in an hour."

CHAPTER XXV.

MARIAM entered, at the servant's request, to await the immediate return of her aunt, who expected her. Elton turned away; but, before he had proceeded many steps, a servant followed, and mysteriously requested his return, as Mrs. Wilton was at home, but wished to see him, unknown to Miss Lincoln. A few moments saw him seated in a quiet breakfast parlour, in earnest, low converse with that lady; and there we will leave them, and follow Mariam into the drawing-room, the door of which scarcely closed upon her, when, from the embrasure of a window, stepped forth a figure which it needed not a second glance to recognize, for the heart acknowledged what the troubled sight might have made otherwise a doubtful vision. Adair stood before her. He was pale, worn, and a cold, reckless, but not *roué* air cast a gloom over the once fine, noble face; though noble still, it had so much of hopelessness, that the spirit's wings were closed from soaring, and the mere man of care stood before her. He did not start—he scarcely seemed pained or glad. A smile, the shadow of one, crossed his face, as he held out a nerveless hand to her trembling grasp. What wilful

blindness falls upon us sometimes; he did not perceive her agitation, or, if seen, it passed as a mere surprise.

"Hah, Mariam!" he said, "we seem doomed to meet here! Tired with my companions of the field, I ran up to pass a day or two in the sweet variety of town!" He laughed ironically. "And that failing to amuse my *blasé* heart, I ventured here again, to sip a purer stream at its source—I mean, in the enjoyment of a sweet woman's society."

"You mean my aunt," she said, agitatedly; "and did she receive you kindly?"

"Ay, as ever; only I have been lectured ever since I came."

"When was that, Richard?"

"Yesterday evening. She told me you were coming to-day, and wishing to see you once more, Marie, here I am; and she, faithless hostess, is absent—so let me do the honour, and hand you a chair." He tried to seem gay, but it sat ill upon his haggard brow.

"I wish Mr. Elton had not left me at the door," she said, forgetting at the moment how painful the name must be to him.

"Leave Elton alone," he hastily cried; "I do not care to see any one but you—just you, once again—for I am leaving England shortly."

"Where are you going, Richard? and why go? Why not stay, and try to be content and happy?"

"Content and happy!" he scornfully laughed, pushing back the hair from his brow; "content with what?—

the loss of all? I do not speak of worldly losses; these are dust, and still less happy—will *you* teach me how I may find that?"

"I would try."

"You alone might have done so once; now, that is a dream forgotten—no, left on my pillow when I quitted it with an aching head on awakening."

"I would lead you to it now," she said, timidly taking his hand as he sat beside her on a couch, "as far as my powers of persuasion might avail; for those who should, have deserted you—they hope to reclaim you by coldness, estrangement. I would try kindness and affection, before your mad gallop of life shall lead you headlong over the precipice of destruction."

"You are severe, Mariam; but perhaps I deserve it—but do not taunt me with the past."

"Oh, Heaven forbid!" she exclaimed, in deep emotion. "I would lead, not harass or drive; let me speak to you as a sister—a loving one, Richard; such I once was to you."

"Far more to me, Marie, you were—and are."

She did not reply, but continued:—"From my soul I pity you; for your faults have been the errors of others. Mr. Elton meant you well; but he was perhaps injudicious in using sarcasm, where gentle counselling had been better, but he did it in all kindness. Your mother—she, too, was wrong; for she treated you as a spoilt child, but she did it in love; so, Richard, forgive all, for Love's dear sake!"

"What do you know of that?" he asked, scornfully laughing; "you, who never loved!"

"True." And she was silent some moments. "But no!" she cried with energy; "I have loved. Nature were imperfect without it. I had a father and mother to love once, and now—why, we love, if only the dumb brute which looks almost human affection in our face, which it is powerless to utter. Love is in every breath we draw, and the full heart must breathe it forth again on the creatures around it, or burst with its store! I love you, too, my poor Richard, as a sister may avow."

"True, Mariam," he answered, gazing in deep emotion on her glowing cheek; "and I prize it even so: I never had a sister's love. Angelina—"

She hastily interrupted him lest one harsh thought should mar the gentleness she sought to implant in the now arid soil of his heart; still, as she strove to defend her, she dropped her glance on the ground, lest its flashing should betray the scorn she felt for that cold, heartless girl. "Miss Adair," she said, "is not to blame; 'tis, I think, the erroneous education she has received, by the fault of those who endeavour to engraft on a woman's mind, a man's energy and knowledge, which chokes all gentler virtues; and thus, tearing out of her heart its silver chords, string it with a hempen coil, toneless and rough. But, forgive her, I think she means you well; and I, as a looker-on, seeing where support fails you, come to cheer you on."

"You can do that safely, Marie," he said, bitterly;

" for you, there is no danger in that path, but for me—" She affected not to hear him.

" I come fearlessly," she continued; " your mere English girl might not dare so much. Reared a tender, hothouse plant, the dread of the world's cold breath would kill her; but I have my half-savage Indian nature, you know, to uphold me" (she tried to smile). " I can brave the world, which I cannot comprehend; sometimes the thing we know affrights us; in our ignorance we dare many dangers."

" Why dare any thing for me, Mariam?" he cried, impetuously rising and pacing the room; " I am an object of no worth in your affections."

" Have I deserved this, Richard?" she said, sadly and reproachfully, rising and leading him back to his seat; " have I not told you how sincere my regard is for you—how great my pity when I see the indifference of others? Let me *lead* you back to what you were; I will not drag you over that rugged road, wounding your feet on the rocks you have strewn there recklessly, but not wilfully; I will not do this, calling you to repent as the bleeding footprints mark your way. No! I will lead you onwards over a smoother road, a little rough at first, perhaps; but we shall come to a moss-grown path at last, where the little laughing flowers shall look up as you pass, peeping in your face as they cast their soft odour around, to purify the very air you inhale; and when we arrive there, Richard, we will sit down, and breathing the Heaven-sent perfume, bless Heaven for

its mercy, and *then*—only then—we will look back, and shudder over the rough ground you have escaped from, and looking thus—bless God that it *is* passed! This I will call repentance!"

As she spoke thus, her hands held his, and the downcast eyes were fixed on their united clasp. She spoke earnestly, but tremblingly. The man must indeed have been free from all self-esteem, not to see that her very soul was in every word and act.

"Mariam," he cried bitterly, as he disengaged one hand, and pressed it to his aching brow, "you will drive me to double desperation! You point out heaven, and condemn me to the hell of only possessing your guidance so far, and no farther! Do you think I ever could be happy without you? Have I not tried all, even my bitterly regretted fault, to forget you? No, girl, I will plunge no deeper. I will go—go as best I may, and seek repentance—reformation—alone. Near you, I should never find it, knowing that the day I became a better man would be one of despair to me, for I should lose you! You must be mad to think I could do so."

"I do beseech you, reflect," she uttered, scarcely intelligibly; "you have been wild, but not so guilty. Oh! think how deeper error will pain all who love you, will——"

"All who love me!" he impetuously cried; "who are they? You do—true, but in mere charity, as you would a dozen others who needed your ministering care. I crave, I must have more to lead me to peace and well-

being; I must have love, or the wide world lies before, to amuse me still." There was little hope of joy in his wild, bitter laugh.

"Love," she whispered, "what could that avail you—to have, and lose it?"

"I do not understand you," he replied, looking inquiringly in her face; and yet, despite the pallor so visible there, without one gleam of the truth crossing his mind.

"Understand me at last," she cried, while the tears gushed from her eyes, raised in all their depth and sadness to his; "that if you need a woman's love to cheer you, you possess it in all the fulness of its first unalloyed fervour, Richard; why tell you this to day, when it is vain, and why have we been so blind until now?"

But one word fell from his lip as his arms encircled the trembling girl.

"Marie," he whispered so lowly, that it seemed as a mere breath; and then, as a faint generating echo, came the words "my Marie," as he strained her to his almost bursting heart, and her long-repressed tears fell heavily over that love so long concealed, so hopelessly acknowledged now.

"My Marie!" he said at last, in a low tone of inexpressible tenderness, "let all come now, all that fate may award, I care not—I possess you; and the thorny road you spoke of is passed. We are on the greensward together; and while I repent all my weakness, faults, and follies, I feel they have been amply punished, in not knowing your love until now."

"Richard," she cried in agony, endeavouring to struggle from his arms, "you forget that we can never be happy, never united! Oh! I was in fault, deeply so, when I permitted this long-concealed secret to escape me; whilst I am speaking to you of right, would you have me wrong one who has never forgotten to shield me from all, Elton? This was a voluntary act, and I must abide by it."

"And can you be another's," he asked, "less now than ever, when a moment of so much deep joy has been ours?—this Heaven-sent moment of love and reconciliation?"

"I never will pain Mr. Elton," she answered in deep affliction; "he has been too good and true to me, for me to render him falsehood and deceit."

"He is too good and kind, Mariam, not to feel for us," was the reply, as he once more drew her on his bosom, as if there alone she could ever find a home.

It is unfortunate that all the senses we require cannot be brought into play at once; the straining of one, weakens another. Thus both were so absorbed by their affection and fears, that hearing became a weakened power, and thus the door of the second drawing-room, which had been locked on the inside, gently opened, and whilst they were yet speaking, some one behind them placed a hand on a shoulder of each; they started in terror, and, looking up, beheld Elton's grave face surveying them over the back of the couch. At that moment it was Mariam who felt the keener of the two their approaching separation, for *she* only saw this.

Adair, on the contrary, in an instant resolved that nothing short of superhuman power should tear her from him; and thus, as Elton walked silently round to the front of the couch, and dropped down between them, Adair sprang up, and, with outstretched hand, sought to welcome the friend to whose good heart he purposed appealing. But the other, affecting not to see the movement, seated himself, and took Mariam's trembling one in his; but the face, though serious, was not severe.

"I was there," he said, pointing to the now open door, "and heard all."

"Then, Elton," quickly responded Adair, "you must know, and feel, how impossible it ever would be for Mariam and myself now to separate?"

"She engaged herself to me, of her own free-will," was the answer. "Did you not, Mariam?" he added, addressing her.

"I did, Mr. Elton," she replied, bowing her head.

"Look up, my child," he said, as the serious face relaxed into a smile of deep meaning; "look up, and respect, if you cannot love me. There is but one thing I feel incapable of pardoning you for; that is, that you should not long since have read the motives which actuated my conduct. As for that fellow (he designated Adair), I can still less excuse him; for he knew me from his boyhood, and to you I am only the acquaintance of a day."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Adair, amazed,

whilst Mariam's inquiring glance was anxiously fixed on his face.

"Ah, well!" he continued, as if thinking aloud, without replying to the question addressed to him, "'tis a melancholy proof of the deceit of the world, that when a man is sincere, and not changeable as a weathercock, in all he says or does, no one gives him credit for it! Here have I been," he turned to Mariam, "telling you, ever since you first met me, that I never had the slightest thought of marriage; and yet, as quite a natural piece of deception, you see me fling myself like an old fool at a young girl's head, and you do not once open your lips to reproach me with my practical error where my theory was so good!"

"Do you mean to say you did not intend to marry her?" exclaimed Adair, grasping his hand.

"Certainly not; I made a fool of myself in appearance, the laughing-stock of all, to give her peace, Dick, and keep her for you; for I knew both your hearts better than you knew them yourselves."

By an involuntary movement of gratitude Mariam rose, and, flinging her arms round Elton's neck, embraced him with sincere reverence and affection.

"Ay, you hussy," he cried, returning it as he drew her like a child on his knee; "you can hug the old fool now, but the deuce a kiss, Dick, would she give me when I was her lover, though I often felt inclined to take one when I saw her patient endurance, not alone of myself, but the cruelty of others. No, Mariam, my

child, not even you, tempted me to dream of changing my state. Here, Dick, take her, and for my sake, as well as her own, love her, for she deserves it!"

As he spoke he slid her gently from his knee beside Adair, whose hands clasped the blushing girl's in his, with that silent eloquence far more expressive than words.

"I am not worthy of her," he said, after a silence of some minutes; "would to Heaven I were!"

"Richard," said Elton seriously, "let all bygones be bygones. Depend upon it, a just but merciful hand will chasten us always for our sins; let us not refuse the happiness it offers. Be assured that our errors are their own avengers; and full often when, in the midst of some scene of joy, we hear a deep sigh, it is the memory of perhaps a repented, but as yet uncancelled fault, which is sent to chasten us."

"If Mariam will but be my guide," Adair said, "I will fear no more faults for the future; and the past, she shall pray for me, and I will hope it may be forgiven."

What she said was whispered as he drew her closely to his heart; and Elton, with humid eyes which would have amazed those who dreaded his cold, cynical nature, gazed fondly on them.

"Is it not strange," he said, shaking his head sagely after a pause, with a profoundly thoughtful air, "that we are such perverse animals! Here have I been, for upwards of a year, endeavouring to lead you two into one another's arms, and, mule-like, you turned away; but the

instant Mariam belonged to another, and there were all sorts of barriers between you, your entire energies were called into play to overleap them! Assuredly the forbidden fruit has sown more seed in this world than any other!"

"Even than the tree of knowledge?" asked a gentle tone behind them; "I come, nevertheless, in search of some." If Mrs. Wilton looked a little paler than usual as she clasped her niece's hand in Adair's, none dreamed of the cause, not even man's vanity, which generally, though gorged to excess, craves more; for once it was satisfied in Richard's case, in Mariam's affection. "What are you going to do with them?" she asked, drawing a chair to the circle, and addressing Elton; "you have still much to overcome."

"Then to you, too—to you mainly, I owe this happiness!" Adair exclaimed with warmth, kissing the soft hand he had taken.

"No, 'tis all Mr. Elton's doing," she said, deeply blushing as she released it in seeming playfulness; "he schemed all."

"But you permitted the poor outcast to call you friend! I would to Heaven my deeds had ever been like yours; then I might have hoped for so bright a reward."

"Hush!" exclaimed Elton, "let us talk common-sense. Mrs. Wilton is quite right, much remains to be done. I would to goodness Angelina were married! But it appears you may entice a man to propose, but he is not married for all that." He glanced slily at

Mariam, on whose lips a sigh rose, a practical proof of Elton's words—that our faults will send up their summons to memory from the heart; *she* thought of Sir Philip.

"Come, my dear Mrs. Wilton," said Elton rising, "let us leave the children together, and we steady folks will go and talk common-sense. I daresay they wish us at Jericho! Think how many sweet things they must say to make up for time lost, and the hours they cannot meet in, since Dick is a blank card at home."

Mrs. Wilton followed her summoner, and we will follow too, nor be indiscreet enough to publish all the two spoke in their half-hour's conversation, which seemed as a minute. We will only name one thing: that Adair, in common honesty, returned a little ring which he had picked up on the carpet where it had fallen when Sir Philip restored it, and Mariam, without a desire that another should claim it, placed it, with trembling fingers and blushing cheeks, on Adair's hand, whilst the rich, pouting lip acknowledged him her heart's choice.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ANGELINA was one of those who find life filled with disgusting things. Thus, nothing could equal her loudly expressed feelings of that sort to her mother, when she saw the extraordinary change which had taken place between Elton and his affianced wife. They were always whispering in corners, walking out together, and then her conscious blushes; all were painful enigmas. There is nothing more distasteful to a perverse mind than to see others happy. Especially if we are miserable ourselves, at all times it is unpleasing; but now, when nothing seemed capable of warning her statue lover Narcissus to life, when, like his namesake, he was too evidently dwindling to a shadow from an overdose of love; *not* a voluntary offering from himself, but a too fond exotic, imbibing all his native vigour. He had fixed the day; it was as distant a one as possibly might be, with decency, considering the wedding-cake and dresses were all ready to be eaten and worn. The hours to her were ages; to him, every day when he arose, a cold sweat stood on his brow, as the ever-present imp, calculation, like a too ready-reckoner, told him another day had fled, and that of the month there

now remained but twenty-nine days. It was not a positive dislike to her, but a more than human distaste to her as a wife; and yet, like a good child, he kissed the rod, and sought comfort in the society of the very man who had beguiled him to this fate—Elton. But this latter found all his once powers of persuasion vain to induce him to abridge the date. He seemed to have no plans—make no preparations. She had to think of all this; and the bitterness it was to her spirit, instead of being coaxed, like a bashful bride, into all sorts of little concessions and counsellings for the future of their married home, to be daily obliged to impose some unpleasant task on her mother, who wrung her hands in sentimental despair, as she recalled her own wooing time. In this state, it was any thing but delightful to observe the good intelligence, and, more, the unreserved affection of Elton and Mariam. More than once he spoke of their approaching union, and a warm blush, and accompanying smile, lit up the girl's face, once so sad. Angelina had but one phrase to express her spite; for her only consolation at first had been, in noticing Mariam's heart-broken look of despair, which, as by miracle, had changed to one of light and life. Even the dark sullen countenance of Leah, which had borrowed its tone from her mistress's sorrow, and had almost affrighted Angelina's strong mind, when she met its scowling expression fixed upon her—one of Mariam's persecutors—now expanded in a broad *black* smile, so perfectly joyous when natural, and set off by the ranges of ivory teeth, as she changed her silent indignation

now, to a pleasant mode of welcoming Angelina, whenever they met, with "Missy Angelina quite well? How 'im Massa Browne? Ah! ha! Missy be a merry wife soon, ah! ha!" and the smiling creature, like a mocking fiend, would pass on chuckling.

There was nothing disrespectful in all this—far from it; but it touched a bitter chord in Angelina's heart; for, though perfectly unacknowledged to herself, nevertheless an innate feeling prompted the thought for certainty's sake, of "Would to Heaven the marriage were over! I am tired to my soul of doubt."

Then she argued that it was all Narcissus' pious character which made mundane matters so indifferent to him. He would alter with matrimony. And, sad to say, this once zealous young lady in all religious matters, irreligiously exclaimed, "I wish Narcissus were just a *little* less evangelical until the marriage takes place—he makes one look so absurd."

Elton quietly commenced a new trial of generalship, now that Mariam, no longer perverse, gave *carte blanche* and full employment to Madame Devy. He, taking to himself full credit for her calm submission to the matrimonial projects of her guardian, one day ventured to insinuate a wish that poor Dick, his godson, might be forgiven, and received, prodigal though he was, in the maternal home.

His mother would have too gladly acceded, for her heart yearned to see him; but Angelina stood a Cerberus at the gate, and her word was law. Had poor Narcissus had courage or energy to act, he would gladly have

lent his aid; but as it was, when Elton endeavoured to lead him to interfere, it seemed as if the already overburdened camel dreaded another weight imposed upon his back.

"My good soul," he would nervously ejaculate to Elton's entreaties, "let us get this affair over first. I can think of nothing else, and then we will see!"

Elton shrugged his shoulders, and walked off to consult with Mrs. Wilton.

Poor Elton had indeed troubles enough to occupy him. When he thought all perfectly settled between Adair and Mariam, the first rapturous delight passed, Dick's high spirit arose to remind him that she was an heiress, and he a ruined man! This took some days to restore him to tranquil hope again, and all was once more like a skiff on a lake of glass, and the lover's rowing joyfully on; for Elton insisted upon making a settlement on his godson of all his property. Another scruple, too, had to be overcome—one, too, of much delicacy. Both Adair and Mariam thought of poor Kate, and he, even at the risk of much danger in the delay, would gladly have paid a tribute of sorrow in this self-denial to her untimely death; but here again Elton urged, "Kate flung herself on your protection; you can scarcely be deemed in fault, the position was so difficult a one; moreover, Mariam *must* marry soon—choose whether it shall be you, or another!"

The point was gained, and all seemed fairly to advance towards a happy termination. "Thank Heaven!" the perplexed guardian and godfather cried energeti-

cally, "for giving me this distaste to matrimony; children would have hurried me into an early grave!"

As time moved on, and the day of Angelina's marriage approached, he grew more buoyant in hope, having found some good excuse for not being married at the same time, as that lady wished. However, in this he enlisted Mrs. Adair on his side, who liked the *êclat* of two weddings better than a double one.

"Let Angelina be off," said Elton to the other trio, Mrs. Wilton, Adair, and Mariam; "and then, Dick my boy, you shall go home, and be well received, I promise you!"

And Angelina seemed not unlikely to be as he desired her, for the time was expended of her maidenhood all but four days; and she was positively smiling as Gunter's men crossed her path at every step with some mystical preparations for the wedding breakfast.

Let us now look at the bridegroom. Up to the present time he had borne all with patient endurance, the day once fixed. Indeed it is doubtful whether, like Lucy Ashton, he was not, except at intervals, oblivious of the truth, he seemed so absorbed in some affair, *hors la maison;* but when in it, he submitted, and that was all she, his intended, now deemed it possible to obtain from him, and her *amour propre* sat down satisfied that with none other would he have been different.

Two days before the projected happy one, a change came over him; he was nervous, excited, ever asking questions like a man seeking to divert thought. The evening arrived prior to the happy day; of course, he

was in Eaton Square. In as delicate a manner as possible he had endeavoured to defer the wedding for a week, "for a most urgent reason." But no one paid attention to this wish; it was expressed to Elton, who had his own reasons for hurrying Angelina off on the wedding tour. At last he ventured to speak to Mrs. Adair, but she "Pooh, pooh'd" the suggestion, as emanating from a most extraordinary bashfulness on the part of a man. Poor Narcissus! he was misunderstood by all.

The affair was moving on peaceably enough, until the day but one before the event—we are retrograding a little—which was to come off at St. George's; when the ever busy Mrs. Bruce cast a brand into the fire, which threw a lurid glare of discontent into Angelina's already fermenting mind against him. That lady had become of late, together with her placid spouse, a frequenter of all missionary meetings and black conversions; and at one of these, the previous evening, she met Narcissus, all animation, delivering himself of a speech, calling upon all to take up their wallets and journey off in quest of souls. He was no longer the pale, thoughtful Narcissus, as of late in Mrs. Adair's drawing-room, but a man whose soul spake out at last, and to some purpose. After haranguing his audience half an hour, he was concluding with—

"And let none charge me, like the many, with preaching what I would not practise, for——"

At this moment his eye fell upon the amazed countenance of Mrs. Bruce, who, by those ferreting qualities

which belong to ladies of inquiring, busy minds, who take up any new caprice (for with her piety was only this), had discovered this missionary meeting, somewhere near the Elephant and Castle. What he intended to say is one thing, what he gave utterance to is another; it was a confusion of the most ambiguous sentences, quickly succeeding one another, in the midst of which he seated himself, and, wiping his agitated brow, left his hearers as wise as they were before about his half-avowed practice of a cherished theory.

Mrs. Bruce rushed off to Angelina, who certainly felt that, though espousing so pious a young man, there is a time for all things, and that he would have been far better beside her than among his missionary hearers. Something of this she said next day, and a little coolness ensued, in which he wrapped himself up, like an aeronaut sailing away in the cold clouds, and kept away from Eaton Square all day. This was a state of things not to be borne; consequently, in the evening, a footman and a note were despatched, to call him to reason and her arms. He came, but might almost as well have stayed away; he was moody and thoughtful. Next day, the last of her girlhood's joy, he was absent nearly the whole of it; and, though she had quite enough to occupy her, still his absence was keenly felt. When he came, in much agitation of manner, all she could obtain from him, in answer to questions a bride should never have been forced to make about the arrangements of the morrow, was—

"Never fear; all will be perfected." And she was

obliged to make eccentricity bear the weight of his conduct. If she had made others suffer by her malignant disposition, Elton never could have invented a surer punishment than the day he urged on Narcissus to propose to her.

"I cannot understand Narcissus," he said to Mariam; "I would to-morrow were over, for so difficult a man to deal with I never met before."

In the evening the bridegroom-elect came. His manner was more embarrassed than ever—absent, flighty, sad; like one endeavouring to gain the upper hand of some overwhelming annoyance, and yet there was an evident kindness of feeling towards Angelina, to which she had been a stranger for some time. When the hour of departure came, her heart rose high in triumph over *her enemies;* for, an enemy to all the world, she imagined every heart against herself, and reading the world, as we are so apt to do, by our own sentiments, to our utter discomfiture full often, she conceived her most sympathizing were those readiest to triumph over her; consequently the spirit, a little cowed by his recent conduct, rose to all its usual arrogance, and she towered above Mariam and her sedate lover in her pride of heart, at having secured a young husband. Once more Elton tried to plead for poor Richard, in an entreaty that a sisterly letter, in all charity, might summon him to the ceremony of the morrow.

"I have before given you my final decision on that subject, Mr. Elton," she haughtily exclaimed. "That,

as the wife of a clergyman, I cannot countenance a man bearing the debauched character of my brother."

"There's one comfort, Angelina," he retorted, "that the clergyman understands Christian charity better than his wife ever will, and is making a proof of it now."

"What do you mean, sir?" she angrily exclaimed.

"Never mind now; some day I'll tell you all you owe me."

She bit her lip, for conviction told her Elton had been a mover in her marriage, by urging on Narcissus.

The morning rose clear and frosty, and as the delighted Angelina stepped into the carriage which was to carry her to St. George's, where an impatient bridegroom was supposed to be awaiting her, the air and joy had almost given a colouring to her wan cheek. Mariam looked really beautiful as bridesmaid, happy beyond any one's doubting, which was the only pang Angelina felt as she ascended the steps leading to the consummation of her hopes. A numerous company awaited their arrival; amongst them Mrs. Bruce stood foremost, who, as she pressed her *dear* Angelina's hand, whispered audibly, "Is it not strange Mr. Browne has not yet arrived?"

Neither did Mr. Browne arrive. It had been arranged that the newly-married couple should start after the breakfast for a continental tour, returning after the orthodox month to Eaton Square, until a residence should be chosen and prepared. He had been firm against her desire of taking and furnishing a house

before their departure, but he brought in so many arguments against it, that she was forced to accede to his wish.

There was, therefore, only one place to send to by the light-footed Mercury employed to seek into the cause of the delay, and this was, his late residence; thither he went in haste, for the hours, which never tarry, were hurrying on towards the fatal one of twelve. Narcissus had told her truly in saying, that another curate was engaged to do duty for him during his absence, but he did not say how long that absence would be! The affrighted Mercury (a groomsman) returned. We will not quote his words—they required frequent repetition to be intelligible; but state facts. The *temporary* curate had been firmly installed, at Narcissus' request, in his place, and he—burning with a desire for martyrdom, different to the one Angelina intended for him—had started by a night train for Liverpool, and was to sail that day as a missionary for Hong Kong!

Some people pretend to faint—for once Angelina was sincere, she did so outright, and of all her so-called friends, not one felt so sincerely for her as her supposed *enemy*, Mariam.

On the return of the wedding party, it was ascertained that a letter had been brought late the night before for Miss Adair; but that, in the hurry and confusion of preparations, it had been set aside as something of no immediate moment to the bride elect; and this letter contained poor Narcissus' painful acknow-

ledgment, "that after a hard trial to subdue his rebellious will, he was forced to admit that marriage was not his vocation, and all his inclinations tended to the calling of a missionary. He was starting for Hong Kong; by a strange fatality, the vessel would sail on his wedding day; and as they had combated his wish for a week's delay in preparations, which would have given him time to act less dishonourably, he was forced to do as he was doing." He concluded with prayers for Angelina's welfare, and that a better, worthier man than himself might lead her to the altar! The wedding breakfast became, indeed, sad as funeral-baked meats, and hirelings devoured Gunter's best, and wiped their mouths in thanksgiving!

CHAPTER XXVII.

ELTON was scarcely astonished. A keen man of the world, he had feared something from Narcissus' manner, though not quite the truth. He was sorely perplexed to find a way to remedy the evil; he had hoped so much from Angelina's absence — indeed, all feeling assured that, once alone with Mrs. Adair, her heart would call loudly for her son's presence. Now Angelina, doubly embittered, stood between Richard and home. Resolved, however, not to lose without an essay to win, Elton, about a week after the event at St. George's, endeavoured to move the hearts at war for peace; but he was forced to admit, that if sorrow subdues a kindly spirit to charity and love, it hardens an evil one: and Angelina declared, if Richard entered the house, she would quit it, so convinced was she, as she had told every one, that her brother's notoriety had made the pious Narcissus adverse to allying himself with the family to which he belonged.

"Then there is but one thing to be done!" exclaimed Elton. "Mariam and I must marry at once; for I am resolved the boy shall have a home, and not be cast on the world for a fault which circumstances forced upon him. So Mariam, my love, you must hurry on your

milliners as quickly as possibly; and I will see the men of law about the settlements."

A warm blush lit up her cheek as he spoke; and Angelina found it doubly disgusting—the love-making of "that idiot Elton," now that she was a *Colombe delaissée.*

Mrs. Adair felt her name at stake, as a woman of sentiment, in the very unsentimental termination of her daughter's engagement; and though she entered with far less energy of soul into all the preparations for the marriage, still she willingly consented to its taking place at once. It may readily be imagined that Angelina would gladly have absented herself; but she preferred the many annoyances of hourly occurrence, to the certain *on dits* and pityings of her friends were she away; and a certain fear was over her, that if no longer in Eaton Square to play Cerberus, her brother, whom she held in detestation, would again be welcomed. There is no hatred to equal a good, warm, sisterly one.

Mrs. Adair had a sovereign dislike to law, law-papers, settlements, and consultations. To oblige her, Elton had arranged and superintended Angelina's; but now, who was to read and peep spectacle-on-nose, for fear of error, into Elton's own? It was his desire that Mariam's property should all be settled on herself, besides certain provisions for younger children, &c., from his own, and during a week, he managed so completely to worry Mrs. Adair's brain with a complication of papers, that when he arrived at last to have the settlements read and signed, she was so thoroughly worn out and disgusted with the

very sight of the parchments, that she begged him at once to skip all preamble and technicalities, and give her the heads. This was a mere form of speech; for she listened to nothing but the extraneous phrases cast in, like *feu follets*, to divert her attention, about the extremely chaste beauty in painting and design of Mariam's carriage, as by himself ordered. As she listened, and contemplated the joyous hilarity of the man, she was fain to borrow Angelina's idea, "That Elton had become perfectly ridiculous and undignified for a man of his sober years."

After a due perusal of the settlements had taken place, witnesses of her signature were summoned from an adjoining room, and Mrs Adair heaved a sigh of satisfaction as she beheld Elton fold up the document, saying that the rest might be accomplished at the lawyer's, "and once more, *parchment* free," Mrs Adair gave up her thoughts to blonde and orange flowers. Two days elapsed in this agreeable occupation; and, despite all Angelina's anxiety to the contrary, not one look even of regret, crossed Mariam's happy face. The former, driven to desperation, even alluded rather coarsely, and most unfeelingly, to Mariam's love for her brother. Blush she did, but certainly not sigh; and Elton, who was present, putting an arm round her waist, said tenderly, "Never mind, my dear; if *I* don't care, who need do so?"

One morning, it was three days after the signing the settlements, Elton entered the room where sate Mrs

Adair and Angelina; Mariam was on his arm, she had been staying two days at her aunt's house. As they entered, instead of advancing as usual after an absence to shake Mrs Adair's hand, she still clung to Elton's, and certainly she was as pale, though not sad, as Angelina could desire to see her.

Mrs Adair looked up, amazed at the phantom-like entrance they made, and after a pause of some moments, ejaculated, in default of more fluent speech, "Well!"

"Well!" he replied, ominously shaking his head, "I trust it may seem so to you, my dear madam; but the fact is, both Mariam and myself, much disliking pomp and ceremony, quietly walked this morning into St. Pancras' church, and have just returned to ask your blessing!"

"Married!" shrieked Mrs Adair and Angelina in a breath; for to the last the latter was buoyed up with the hope of seeing Mariam falter, and evince a disinclination to this marriage.

"Marriage, my dear madam," he sententiously said, "is indeed a ship at sea; we have many storms to encounter, and seldom are piloted safely into port, if the waves run high. I thought to do so, as you know; and here you see before you a poor wretch, whose vessel was boarded within sight of land, himself cast high and dry on a desert island, whilst a piratical craft, well to the wind, has sailed away with her. I certainly went to the church; but pity me, pray, another married my bride——"

"Gracious Heaven, what do you mean?" exclaimed Mrs. Adair. Angelina's fears suggested the truth, and though her heart fainted with overwhelming rage, she was not at all surprised as her brother walked calmly in, and, drawing Mariam's arm smilingly from Elton's, placed it within his own.

Slowly following, with a calm, happy face, came the self-conquered Mrs. Wilton; and, to complete the *tableau*, Leah's black face and dazzling teeth grinned in the doorway!

"Madam," foamed Angelina, "will you countenance this? Miss Lincoln is your ward, under age, and you can by law——"

"Stop!" interrupted Elton, smiling; "I have not told all the blunders of this affair. By some extraordinary bungling, Dick's name was substituted for mine in the settlement signed by your mother, Angelina; therefore, I don't see what can be done!"

"*I* shall not remain in the house with that infamous young man!" she exclaimed, livid with rage, as she dashed hopeless from the room.

A mother's heart, however weak she may be, is seldom perfectly callous to a child's fate, though unfortunately such is sometimes the case; certain it is, that in the end Mrs. Adair warmly embraced her son, Mariam, even Mrs. Wilton, who, as the girl's natural guardian, had countenanced the marriage, and shook hands warmly with Elton, who affected to sigh as he regarded Mariam.

Little more remains to be said—Angelina remained, for the others departed. Elton had forgotten nothing in their arrangements; and, as Adair seated himself beside his happy bride in their travelling carriage, Leah all rejoicing in the rumble, he said tenderly, "Admit now, dearest Marie, that if it be a torture to be '*unis d'habitation, et non de cœur*,' tis indeed true, that, '*unis d'habitation et de cœur est un paradis!*'"

The world said thousands of things about this marriage. Sir Philip Montgomery, who had still hovered round, deeming that there might yet be a wreck, from which a spar might waft Mariam to his feet, started in despair on the continent, that refuge of all the heart-broken and ill-doing, who, thus going, impress our neighbours with the idea that most of the English are gloomy, splenetic, or rank vagabonds. Mrs. Bruce and her husband became more than ever attached to missionaries, seeing that home acts and deeds were so depraved and shocking, and often over their bohea conversed and conjectured about that elect vase of china—Narcissus Browne.

Elton said, and we trust many will agree with him, that where we are all such frail crockery, we should not fling away a cup of precious workmanship, though a little flawed by contact with the world, lest it fall to the ground and be broken into worthless atoms, but in charity conceal its flaws, shew its beauties, and, holding it in our esteem, raise it in the world's. Richard Adair is our living simile of the Sevres vase; and, as he held

Mariam to his heart, the repentant man owned that Heaven was more loving than even just, for he had not merited his happiness!

THE END.

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